Improving diversity and inclusion in peer review at Lancet journals

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The diagram illustrates a vicious cycle that disadvantages women in academic and professional settings.

1. Poor representation of women leads to less advancement and promotion.
2. Less funding and awards result in fewer publications.
3. Fewer publications and participation as peer reviewers and authors exacerbate the initial poor representation.
Gender Balance of Peer Reviewers

Large Majority of Peer Reviewers are Male

Clinical peer reviewers of Articles
Author gender in The Lancet journals 2014-2017

Research articles

Julio González-Alvarez  The Lancet  30 June 2018
Reviewers for Lancet Psychiatry by country income level

60 countries represented
31% USA
23% UK
Reviewers for Lancet Global Health by country income level August 2017-August 2018

64 countries represented but nearly one-third from USA and 15% from UK
Lancet initiatives to address gender bias

A commitment for the proportion of women and men on Lancet journal editorial boards to be equal in 2020
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Editor in chief</th>
<th>Proportion female editorial staff</th>
<th>Proportion female editorial board members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TLPublic Health</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>TLPsychiatry</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>33</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Lancet</td>
<td>M</td>
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<td>39</td>
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<tr>
<td>TLHIV</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>50 ✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>TLChild and Adolescent</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>37</td>
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<tr>
<td>TLGlobal Health</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>36</td>
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<tr>
<td>TLHaematology</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>33</td>
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<tr>
<td>TLDiabetes &amp; Endocrinology</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>50 ✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>TLPlanetary Health</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>TLInfectious Diseases</td>
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<tr>
<td>TLGastroenterology &amp; Hep</td>
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<td>TLNeurology</td>
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<td>100</td>
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</table>
Editorial Board
Development Programme

Early career mental health professionals from low and middle income countries, who are interested in improving their knowledge of and engaging in psychiatry research in all areas, including service delivery.

Aim is to build capacity in low and middle income countries, initially by direct investment in the members of the programme, and ultimately by those members passing on their knowledge and experience gained by the association with The Lancet Psychiatry.
Lancet initiatives to improve diversity and inclusion

Set targets to invite and secure more women peer reviewers

If clinical specialty is particularly poor in representation of women, consider relative rather than absolute targets, e.g. “within 12 months we will increase our proportion of female reviewers by 25%”

Track and report internally, to readers and externally
Regarding gender, however, we can do more. We will aim to invite 50% women on every paper over the next year, with the goal of achieving an overall ratio that is much closer to parity than it currently is. Our task will be made difficult by the fact that, of our much smaller pool of regular statistical advisers, only about 25% are currently women. We therefore welcome applications, by email to the address below, from qualified female statisticians to join our pool. We offer a modest honorarium for each review.
Display a ‘diversity pledge’ on our website, information for authors, reviewer invitations, and commissioning letters.

“We encourage diversity in co-authorship/peer review including women, early-stage researchers, and colleagues from the Global South”

For all global health content, local reviewers will be mandatory.
For our Series and Commissions, we will strengthen our preference for at least 50% women and 50% Global South contributors, making it a requirement of all lead authors and editors to justify why such ratios are not met. We will continue to exercise positive action in diversifying our selected authors for Comment, World Report, Reviews, Seminars, and other commissioned and invited content.

Jocalyn Clark and Richard Horton
The Lancet February 9, 2019
‘Meet the Editor’ sessions with early stage researchers and/or gender groups

Publishing workshops targeted at junior researchers

Hangzhou May 2019
Diversify all other aspects of our journals:

- Image use
- Cover art
- Podcast/interview subjects
- Profiles
- News and Features
- Social media content
- Newsletters
- Conference materials
Campaign for wider change  
#LancetWomen

Advancing women in science, medicine, and global health

Gender bias is powerful and insidious. It is an expression of unequal distribution of power within societies and of the low value placed on women’s work and contributions to public life. To advance women in science, medicine, and global health, fundamental societal change is required alongside stronger institutional policies and commitments.

— Jocalyn Clark, Elizabeth Zuccala, and Richard Horton