Editorial Practices in Gender Equality by the Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology (FECYT)

Jesús Segarra-Saavedra
University of Alicante (Spain)
jesus.segarra@ua.es

Belén Cambronero-Saiz
Universidad Internacional de La Rioja (Spain)
belen.cambronero@unir.net

DOI: https://doi.org/10.13165/WinS-26-10

Abstract. The FECYT awards the Quality Seal and the Mention of Good Publishing Practices in Gender Equality (MGPPGE) to scientific journals with the aim of eliminating structural gaps and establishing equality as the norm. We analyse the 2018–2023 evolution of the MGPPGE in the social sciences and humanities and evaluate the effectiveness of the procedure for awarding the MGPPGE through a case study of the journal *IROCAMM*. Of the 581 journals analysed, only 36.7 % held the MGPPGE. The number of journals with a mention is growing (22.7 % in 2018 and 47.5% in 2023). Education and Communication had the highest number of mentions (31.5 % and 29.6 %), far ahead of Archaeology (20.2 %) or Fine Arts (18.8 %). The percentages of journals with MGPPGE are higher in journals in the lower quartiles: 41.67 % in Q3 and 39.19 % in Q4. *IROCAMM's* trajectory meets the parity criteria but does not achieve MGPPGE in 2025 given the sample of articles used in the call for applications.

Keywords: Scientific journals; inclusive science; public policy; scientific quality; #nomásMatildas.

Introduction

Despite the introduction of legislation such as Organic Law 3/2007 on effective equality between women and men and Organic Law 2/2024 on equal representation and a balanced presence of women and men, amongst others, gender inequalities remain a reality that affects all spheres of life, and scientific and academic institutions are no exception. Jaramillo et al. (2025) highlight the under-representation of women in both teaching and research, particularly in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) fields (Epifanio & Calvo-Iglesias, 2024).

The CRUE (Confederation of Rectors of Spanish Universities) does not reflect gender-inclusive language in its name —specifically, it uses the masculine form *rectores* and does not include the feminine *rectoras*—, despite the fact

that 25 % of Spanish universities have a female rector at the heart of their institutional hierarchy. Therefore, if within such a structural system the institutions themselves tend to be unequal, it is hardly surprising that, firstly, the other dependent bodies, such as university journals, perpetuate the imbalance and, secondly, begin to operate, among others, bodies such as the Network of Gender Equality Units for University Excellence (RUIGEU), which brings together the units, offices, observatories, commissions and secretariats for equal opportunities between women and men from Spanish public universities and those private institutions that apply for membership. The fact that the editorial boards of scientific journals in Medicine (Amrein et al., 2011; Erren et al., 2014; Østby et al., 2013), Psychology (González Sala and Osca-Lluch, 2018) and Biomedicine (Huamán-Guerrero & Cruz-Vargas, 2016), amongst others, have higher proportions of men on their editorial and scientific teams, as well as in peer review and authorship roles, is not an isolated phenomenon.

As specialised communication channels, managed predominantly with public funds and by public institutions, scientific journals must promote gender equality comprehensively, from their editorial policies to their review and publication processes (Coslado et al., 2023) and the use of inclusive language. The fact is that scientific journals must integrate both women and men into their messages and content, understood as facilitators and shapers of future knowledge. This is not a utopian ideal. Segarra-Saavedra et al. (2021) note that among scientific journals in the field of Communication, the promotion and use of inclusive and non-sexist language is on the rise, just as Lange & von Stockhausen (2025) observe that its use is also growing at a general level, and Borito (2023) notes this trend in internal university communications.

In this regard, initiatives such as those by Borrell et al. (2015) seek to promote gender equality in scientific publication and dissemination in the case of the journal *Gaceta Sanitaria*, addressing key aspects such as authorship, terminology and inclusive language, metadata, and other elements of the scientific structure; or those by Heidari et al. (2016) who, through the SAGER guidelines—developed by the Gender Policy Committee established in 2012 by the European Association of Scientific Publishers—set out guidelines for conducting analyses disaggregated by sex/gender.

Aguillo (2025), for his part, aims to raise the profile of women researchers and their impact as measured by citations through the study of their profiles on Google Scholar with an ORCID identifier (N=11,000), covering both Spanish women conducting research in Spain and abroad, as well as foreign women researchers affiliated with a Spanish institution. Notable figures include Vasili A Mitsou (CSIC, 315.899) and María Moreno Llácer (University of Valencia, 247.295).

At an institutional level, the Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology (FECYT), which has been responsible since 2001 for assessing the editorial and scientific quality of scientific journals, also aims to eliminate structural gender gaps in the field of research and to promote equality as a standard of academic excellence by awarding a 'Mention of Good Editorial Practices in Gender Equality' (MGPPGE). This mention is awarded to journals that meet at least three of the following requirements: 1) gender parity in governing bodies;

2) gender parity in peer review and inclusive authorship policies; 3) publication of authorship statistics disaggregated by sex; and 4) promotion of the inclusion of authors' full first names rather than initials; and two of the following three requirements: 1) promoting inclusive language through their editorial policy recommendations; 2) recommending sex/gender-disaggregated analysis across all work; 3) including the assessment of the gender perspective in the review of work and evaluation reports (FECYT, 2022).

These clearly defined criteria are intended to ensure that the measures are not purely quantitative but also qualitative. However, despite growing institutional attention to gender equality in scientific publishing, there is still little empirical evidence regarding the development and ease of actual implementation of these good practices within the Spanish journal system which, despite its egalitarian structure in its management team, still does not meet the requirements linked to promoting the inclusion of a gender perspective in research, as well as the use of inclusive language.

In light of this situation and within this context, this research aims to analyse the presence and evolution of the MGPPGE in Spanish scientific journals in the social sciences and humanities, taking into account temporal, disciplinary and quartile ranking variables, and to assess the ease of implementation of the procedure for awarding the Mention of Good Editorial Practices in Gender Equality (MGPPGE) through a case study of the journal *IROCAMM*, a candidate for the MGPPGE in 2025.

Methodology

A descriptive and longitudinal analysis is carried out of the trends in the awarding of the FECYT Quality Seal and the Mention of Good Publishing Practices in Gender Equality (MGPPGE) to Spanish scientific journals in the field of Social Sciences and Humanities. Using a database created specifically for this purpose based on the Classification of Visibility and Impact of Spanish Scientific Journals with the FECYT Quality Seal, information was compiled regarding the journal's field of knowledge, the year of evaluation, the quartile in which the journal is classified, the score awarded, whether it holds the MGPPGE, and the year. The information was compiled in December 2025, using data from the period between 2018 and 2023.

With regard to the journal *IROCAMM*, information was compiled covering its entire publishing history, that is, for the period between 2018 and 2025, relating to: 1) gender parity across different areas (the number of women in roles such as authorship, peer review, the editorial board and the scientific committee); 2) visibility (inclusion of the full first names of the authors of the articles) and 3) recommendations (inclusive language in its editorial policy, sex/gender-disaggregated analysis across the entire work, and inclusion of gender perspective assessment in the peer review and evaluation reports).

The statistical software Jamovi was used for the quantitative analysis, and ChatGPT was used to verify the results.

Results

Of the total number of unique journals analysed (N=581), only 36.7 % were mentioned in the MGPPGE. Analysis by year shows that, over the study period, there has been a gradual increase in the number of journals receiving this mention, rising from 10 in 2018 to 85 in 2023 (see Fig. 1).

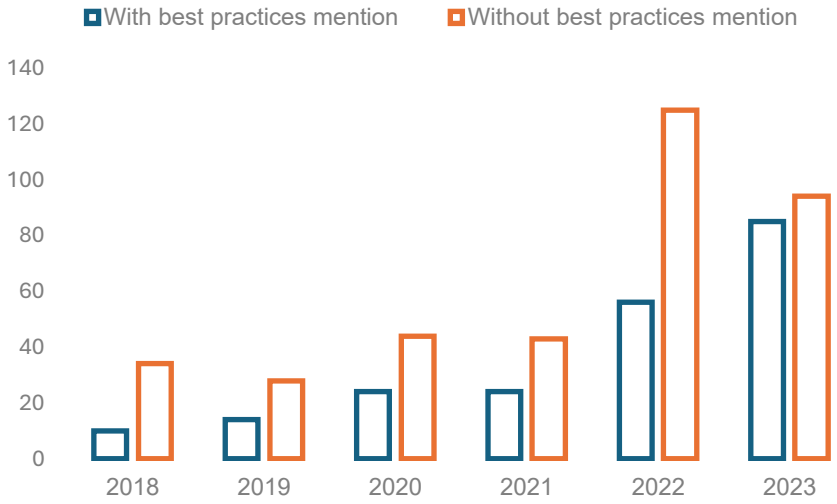


Fig. 1. Absolute frequencies of Spanish scientific journals with and without mention of editorial best practices in gender equality

However, as the sample is unbalanced (varying by year), the relative analysis also shows that the increase has been gradual, rising from 22.7 % of journals with MGPPGE in 2018 to 47.5 % in 2023, with this upward trend being statistically significant (Z = 2.78; p = 0.005) (see Fig. 2).

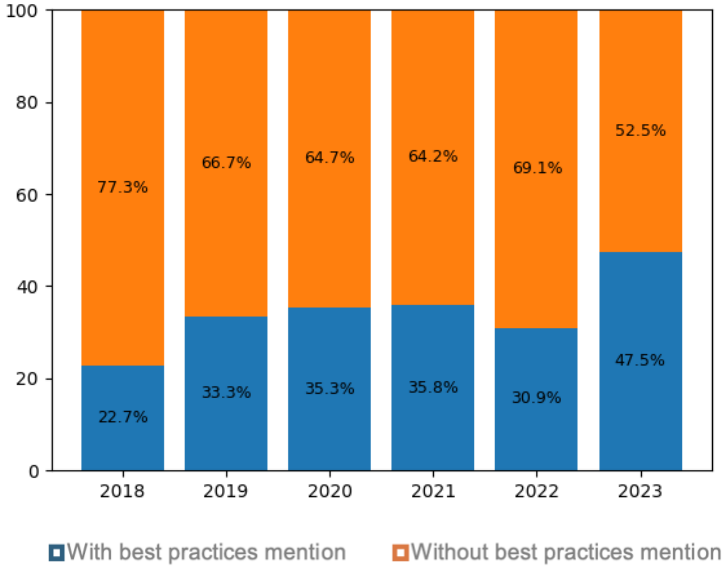


Fig. 2. Relative frequencies of Spanish scientific journals with and without mention of editorial best practices in gender equality

With regard to differences by subject area, there are notable variations depending on the field of study, with journals in the Education and Communication categories accounting for the highest number of total (MGPPGE) mentions (31.5 % and 29.6 % respectively), far ahead of journals in other disciplines such as Archaeology (20.2 %) or Fine Arts (18.8 %), with this difference being statistically significant (χ^2 = 11.73; p = 0.008) (see Fig. 3). However, it should be noted that this latter field of knowledge has seen a notable increase in (MGPPGE) mentions between 2022 and 2023, placing it almost on a par with Communication journals and surpassing the fields of Education Sciences and Archaeology in percentage terms.

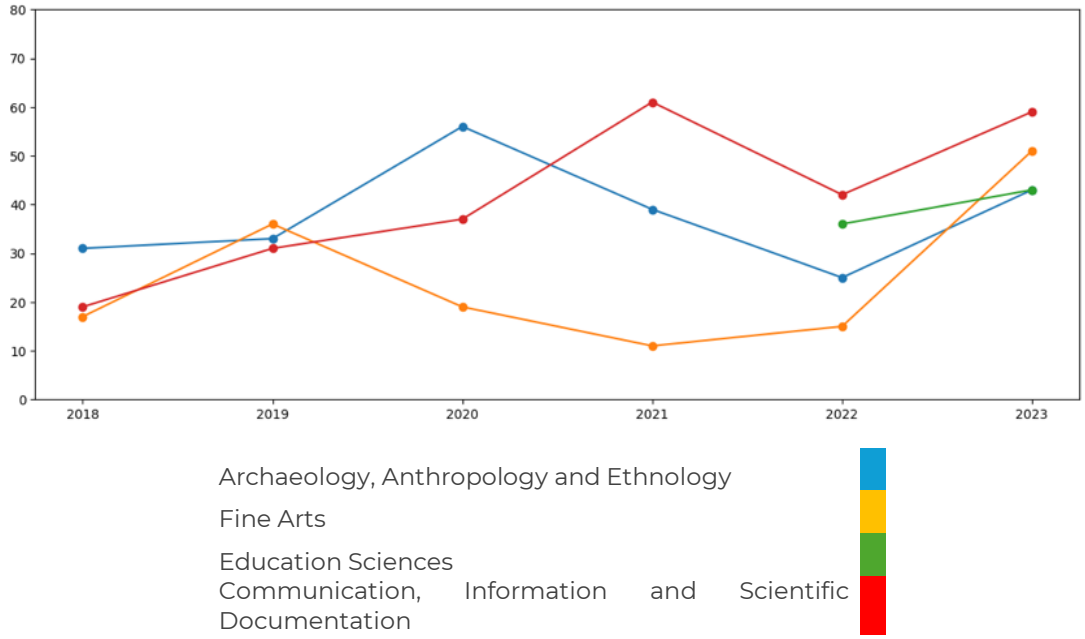


Fig. 3. Relative percentages of mentions of good publishing practices by subject area

When we assess the number of (MGPPGE) mentions per journal impact factor, we see that the proportion of journals with MGPPGE is higher among those in the lowest quartiles, totalling 41.67 % for journals classified as Q3 and 39.19 % for Q4.

Finally, when we analyse the transitions of journals over time, the data show that the most common outcome is for journals to maintain their previous status (68.39 %). However, when viewed in a disaggregated manner, it is evident that the majority of them remain in a state of negative immobility (57.85 %), meaning that a journal without a mention has continued without one (No-No), and only 10.54 % retain positive continuity (Yes-Yes). However, as this is a dynamic process that is reassessed every two years, when we look at the transition between journals that gain the mention (No-Yes) and those that lose it (Yes-No), we see that the majority gain it (17.71 %) compared to those that lose it (13.90 %).

When examining this data by field of knowledge, and focusing on the analysis of those journals that have achieved or maintained the designation over time,

it is evident that the field of Communication has the highest concentration (n=104; 50.96 %) (see Table 1).

Table 1. Changes in the listing of good publishing practices by subject area

Area	No-No	Yes-Yes	No-Yes	Yes-No	Total
Archaeology, Anthropology and Ethnology	32 (36.36 %)	15 (17.05 %)	22 (25.00 %)	19 (21.59 %)	88
Fine Arts	67 (59.82 %)	5 (4.46 %)	25 (22.32 %)	15 (13.39 %)	112
Educational Sciences	45 (45.00 %)	15 (15.00 %)	21 (21.00 %)	19 (19.00 %)	100
Communication, Information and Scientific Documentation	32 (30.77 %)	21 (20.19 %)	32 (30.77 %)	19 (18.27 %)	104

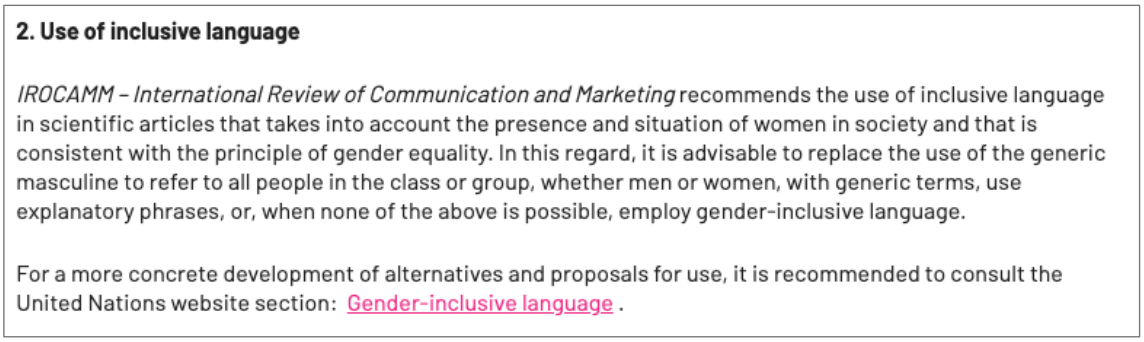
Focusing on the case study of the scientific journal *IROCAMM*, Table 2 shows that throughout its history and up to the year 2025, the journal has met the gender parity criteria on the editorial board (Women = 52.2 %; Men = 47.8 %), on the scientific committee (Women = 49.2 %; Men = 50.8 %), among those reviewing submitted articles (Women = 60.6 %; Men = 39.4 %) and in the authorship of published texts (Women = 56 %; Men = 44 %), with the exception of 2025, when there were only 8 female authors and 19 male authors among the published articles.

Table 2. History of authorship and reviewers at *IROCAMM*

Year	Published papers	Authors (men)	Authors (women)	Total authorship	International authorship	Dr.	Reviewers (men)	Reviewers (women)
2025	14	**19**	8	27	10	26	13	15
2024	14	11	24	35	25	35	8	20
2023	14	10	16	26	9	26	14	16
2022	14	13	11	24	18	24	13	15
2021	15	11	17	28	17	27	16	13
2020	16	14	10	24	5	24	18	14
2019	16	11	24	35	21	26	3	29
2018	7	2	6	8	2	1	2	12
TOTAL	110	91	116	207	107	189	87	134
Percentage		44.0 %	**56.0 %**	100 %	51.7 %	91.3 %	39.4 %	**60.6 %**

The problem arises because the call for evaluations offers only one option: to review authors from the last four years published by the journal. This prevents journals with a short track record, such as this one—which nevertheless maintain consistent figures over time—from being eligible for this recognition, as it depends on the gender of the authors of the texts that are received and pass the mandatory editorial and scientific review processes. It should be borne in mind that this is an emerging journal and, as such, has a low rejection rate.

Taking a positive view of these evaluation processes, which promote equality and enable a review of editorial procedures and the content published by journals, is facilitated by the fact that policies are being amended to provide author statistics broken down by gender and to promote inclusive language through their recommendations and editorial policy:



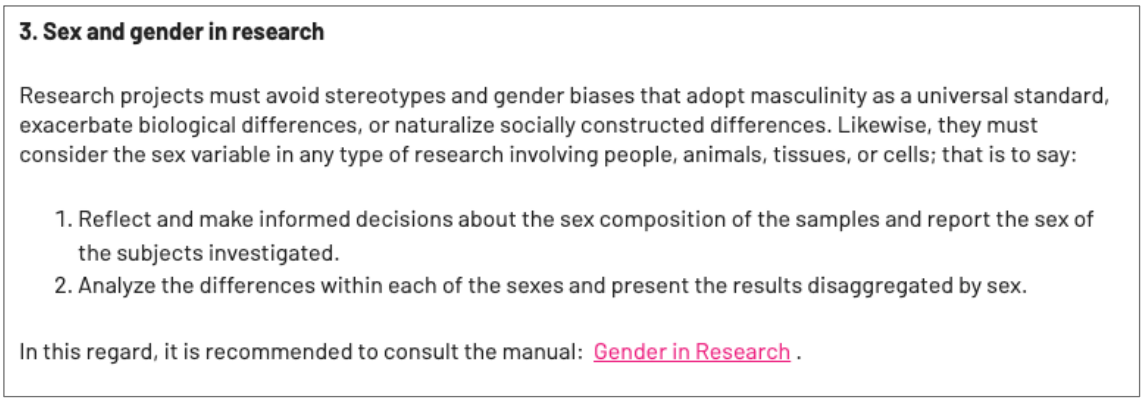
2. Use of inclusive language

IROCAMM – International Review of Communication and Marketing recommends the use of inclusive language in scientific articles that takes into account the presence and situation of women in society and that is consistent with the principle of gender equality. In this regard, it is advisable to replace the use of the generic masculine to refer to all people in the class or group, whether men or women, with generic terms, use explanatory phrases, or, when none of the above is possible, employ gender-inclusive language.

For a more concrete development of alternatives and proposals for use, it is recommended to consult the United Nations website section: Gender-inclusive language .

Fig. 4. Section of the *IROCAMM* journal's website dedicated to promoting the use of inclusive language in the workplace

As well as recommending a sex/gender-disaggregated analysis across the board in the articles it receives, and including an assessment of the gender perspective in its peer reviews and evaluation reports:



3. Sex and gender in research

Research projects must avoid stereotypes and gender biases that adopt masculinity as a universal standard, exacerbate biological differences, or naturalize socially constructed differences. Likewise, they must consider the sex variable in any type of research involving people, animals, tissues, or cells; that is to say:

1. Reflect and make informed decisions about the sex composition of the samples and report the sex of the subjects investigated.
2. Analyze the differences within each of the sexes and present the results disaggregated by sex.

In this regard, it is recommended to consult the manual: Gender in Research .

Fig. 5. Section of the *IROCAMM* journal's website

At the same time, the journal should review its guidelines to ensure the use of inclusive language and maintain consistency between its stated aims and its published content.

LISTA DE PERSONAS REVISORAS – AÑO 2026

H	UNIVERSIDAD	PAÍS	M	UNIVERSIDAD	PAÍS
Elpidio Del Campo	Universidad Miguel Hernández	ESPAÑA	Ileyha Dagalp	Universidad de Gotemburgo	SUECIA
Manuel Cartes	Universidad de Extremadura	ESPAÑA	Vera Ribeiro	ISCE Douro	PORTUGAL
Alfonso Cortés González	Universidad de Málaga	ESPAÑA	María Soledad Vargas Carrillo	Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso	CHILE

Fig. 6. Document published in the *IROCAMM* journal concerning reviewers. Previously, it referred only to (male) reviewers

Discussion and conclusions

One of the most significant findings is the higher number of scientific journals recognised for good editorial practices in gender equality among the lowest-ranked scientific journals. This finding reinforces the criticism that a journal's impact and/or bibliometric ranking should not be used as the sole indicator of scientific quality (Hicks et al., 2015), and shows that journals in the middle or lower quartiles can demonstrate levels of commitment to gender equality best practices comparable to those of journals in the highest quartiles.

The longitudinal analysis shows that, although most journals maintain their previous position, a significant proportion manage to incorporate references to good editorial practices in gender equality over time, adhering to this commitment and distinctive value. This pattern is particularly evident in the fields of Communication, Information and Scientific Documentation, and Education Sciences, which have traditionally been more sensitive to debates on editorial ethics, inclusive policies and the social responsibility of science.

However, the case study of the journal *IROCAMM* highlights certain tensions within the current evaluation model. Although criteria for gender parity were met across the various editorial, peer review and authorship bodies (with the exception of the first issue of 2025), the absence of any mention of this suggests that the qualitative requirements linked to the explicit incorporation of a gender perspective into editorial processes continue to represent a significant barrier for some scientific journals. This finding invites reflection on the need to accompany evaluation policies with training and guidance initiatives that facilitate the effective implementation of such practices, as well as to propose more than one scenario for requesting information and documentation in order to qualify for these distinctions, one of which should be of a longitudinal nature and cover historical development.

Overall, the results highlight the role of the Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology as a key player in promoting a more inclusive science and demonstrate that gender equality can and must be established as a central criterion of editorial excellence. Future research could extend the analysis to

other fields of knowledge or qualitatively explore the strategies adopted by journals that manage to retain the distinction over time.

Author Contributions

Author 1: Conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, investigation, project administration, supervision, validation, visualization, and writing original draft, review & editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, investigation, project administration, software, supervision, validation, visualization, and writing original draft, review & editing.

Tools of Artificial Intelligence

ChatGPT (OpenAI, 2026) was used as a supplementary tool to assist in checking the consistency of the statistical outputs without replacing the authors' final validation.

References

1. Aguillo, Isidro (2025). *Mujeres investigadoras españolas y en España*. Figshare. https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.28334765
2. Amrein, Karin; Langmann, Alexandra; Fahrleitner-Pammer, Anna**;** Pieber, Thomas & Zollner-Schwetz, Ingrid (2011). Women underrepresented on editorial boards of 60 major medical journals. *Gender Medicine, 8*(6), 378–387. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.genm.2011.10.007
3. Borito, Rosana (2023). Gender-inclusive language of office communications in an academic setting. *International Journal of Innovative Research in Multidisciplinary Education, 2*(10). https://doi.org/10.58806/ijirme.2023.v2i10n01
4. Borrell, Carme; Vives-Cases, Carmen; Domínguez-Berjón, María Felicitas; Álvarez-Dardet, Carlos (2015). Las desigualdades de género en la ciencia: *Gaceta Sanitaria* da un paso adelante. *Gaceta Sanitaria, 29*(3), 161–163. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gaceta.2015.03.005
5. Coslado, María Ángeles; De Filippo, Daniela; Ros, Gregorio; Sanz-Casado, Elías (2023). Análisis de buenas prácticas editoriales en igualdad de género en España. *Revista Española de Documentación Científica, 46*(1), e348. https://doi.org/10.3989/redc.2023.1.1952
6. Epifanio, Isabel; Calvo-Iglesias, Elvira (2024). Acciones para la igualdad de género en las áreas científico-técnicas de las universidades españolas. *Educación XX1, 27*(2), 19–36. https://doi.org/10.5944/educxx1.38279
7. Erren, Thomas C.; Groß, Julian V.; Shaw, David M. S. B. (2014). Representation of women as authors, reviewers, editors in chief, and editorial board members at 6 general medical journals in 2010 and 2011.

JAMA Internal Medicine, 174(4), 633–636. https://doi.org/10.1001/jamainternmed.2013.14760

8. Fundación Española para la Ciencia y la Tecnología (FECYT) (2022). *Guía de evaluación: Octava edición del procedimiento de participación en la evaluación de la calidad editorial y científica de revistas científicas españolas*. https://calidadrevistas.fecyt.es
9. Gobierno de España (2007). *Ley Orgánica 3/2007 para la igualdad efectiva de mujeres y hombres*. https://www.boe.es/eli/es/lo/2007/03/22/3/con
10. Gobierno de España (2024). *Ley Orgánica 2/2024 de representación paritaria y presencia equilibrada de mujeres y hombres*. https://www.boe.es/eli/es/lo/2024/08/01/2/con
11. González Sala, Ferran; Osca-Lluch, Julia (2018). Desigualdad de género en órganos directivos y producción científica de las revistas iberoamericanas de psicología de mayor visibilidad internacional. *Revista Española de Documentación Científica, 41*(3), e211. https://doi.org/10.3989/redc.2018.3.1506
12. Heidari, Shirin; Babor, Thomas; De Castro, Paula; Tort, Sílvia; Curno, Melanie (2016). Sex and gender equity in research: Rationale for the SAGER guidelines and recommended use. *Research Integrity and Peer Review, 1*(2). https://doi.org/10.1186/s41073-016-0007-6
13. Hicks, Diana; Wouters, Paul; Waltman, Ludo; de Rijcke, Sarah; Rafols, Ismael (2015). Bibliometrics: The Leiden Manifesto for research metrics. *Nature, 520*(7548), 429–431. https://doi.org/10.1038/520429a
14. Huamán-Guerrero, Manuel; Cruz-Vargas, José (2016). Sexo y género en ciencias biomédicas: SAGER Guidelines. [Editorial]. *Revista de la Facultad de Medicina Humana, 16*(2), 8–10. https://doi.org/10.25176/RFMH.v16.n2.662
15. Jaramillo, Ana María; Macedo, Marcos; Oliveira, Matheus; Karimi, Fariba; Menezes, Ronaldo (2025). Systematic comparison of gender inequality in scientific rankings across disciplines. *Social and Information Networks*, 1–11. https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2501.13061
16. Lange, Elisabeth; von Stockhausen, Laura (2025). What affects people's use of and attitudes toward gender-inclusive language? A literature review. *Frontiers in Psychology, 16*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2025.1657753
17. Østby, Gudrun; Strand, Håvard; Nordås, Ragnhild; Gleditsch, Nils Petter (2013). Gender gap or gender bias in peace research? Publication patterns and citation rates for *Journal of Peace Research*, 1983–2008. *International Studies Perspectives, 14*(4), 493–506. https://www.jstor.org/stable/44214636
18. Red de Unidades de Igualdad de Género para la Excelencia Universitaria (RUIGEU) (2021). *¿Qué es la Red?* https://www.uv.es/ruigeu/es/red/-es-red.html
19. Segarra-Saavedra, Jesús; Hidalgo-Marí, Tatiana; Tur-Viñes, Victoria (2021). Prácticas editoriales de igualdad de género en revistas científicas españolas de Comunicación. *RAE-IC. Revista de la Asociación Española*

de Investigación de la Comunicación, *8*(16), 1–19. https://doi.org/10.24137/raeic.8.16.1

International Conference

Women in Science

Empowering Inclusive Futures

February 11-12, 2026
Mykolas Romeris University
Vilnius, Lithuania

Women in Science International Conference 2026: Proceedings

Edited by:
Isabel Palomo-Domínguez, Rūta Tamošiūnaitė, and Ana León-Manzanero

Published by:
Mykolas Romeris University
Vilnius, Lithuania

Publication date: 1 July 2026
ISBN: 978-609-488-138-1
DOI: 10.13165/WinS-26

© 2026 The Authors.
This work is licensed under a Creative Commons CC-BY 4.0 licence.

Honorary Patron of the Conference:
Prime Minister of Lithuania
Inga Ruginienė

ORGANIZERS

Mykolas Romeris University

ACE | BALTIC

COLLABORATORS

EWORA EUROPEAN WOMEN RECTORS ASSOCIATION

EMBAJADA DE ESPAÑA EN LITUANIA

cooperación española

frA | FUNDACIÓN RAMÓN ARECES