

EULAR  
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## FILLING DATA GAPS: GENDER EQUITY IN ACADEMIC RHEUMATOLOGY

**New empirical data generated by EULAR to inform a new task force**

**Gender equity can contribute to social progress and research quality. Yet, in many fields of academic medicine, women remain under-represented, especially in leadership roles. Based on survey data collected by EULAR, this study provides empirical evidence on the issue of gender equity in academic rheumatology.**

Evidence on gender equity in academic rheumatology in Europe is currently limited. This knowledge gap has a direct effect on the ability of professional bodies to improve gender equity. To address this, EULAR – the European Alliance of Associations for Rheumatology – designed a study using web-based surveys to collect information from EULAR scientific member society leaders, EULAR and Emerging EULAR Network (EMEUNET) members, and EULAR Council members. Responses were analysed based on the male/female gender of the respondents.

The results indicated that there were disproportionately fewer women in academic rheumatology than in clinical rheumatology. Furthermore, women tended to be under-represented in senior academic roles. From 324 responses of EULAR and EMEUNET members in 24 countries, there appeared to be no gender differences in terms of peoples' leadership aspirations, self-efficacy in career advancement, work–life integration, or the share of time spent on research. However, gender differences became apparent for working hours, and levels of perceived gender discrimination or sexual harassment. For example, 38% of women had experienced gender discrimination in their professional careers in the past 5 years, compared to just 13% of men.

Out of 26 factors that could impact career advancement, there were gender differences observed in the ranking of over a quarter of the items. These included societal issues such as the provision of maternity/paternity leave, but also professional factors such as gendered norms and behaviours within rheumatology, and the visibility of suitable role models.

Furthermore, when looking at a set of potential interventions to aid career advancement, there were gender differences apparent in one in three of the factors. These included gender-balanced committees and editorial boards, as well as policies on gender-based funding and pledges for no male-only panels.

These findings are novel in the context of rheumatology in Europe – but similar to previous research undertaken to examine the institutional culture in medical schools in the United States. The data collected will inform a new EULAR task force in developing a framework of potential interventions to accelerate gender equitable career advancement of rheumatologists, health professionals, and non-clinical scientists in academic rheumatology. The aim is to develop a framework of interventions to help achieve gender-equitable career advancement within academic rheumatology.

**Source**

[Ovseiko PV, et al. Gender equity in academic rheumatology, current status and potential for improvement: a cross-sectional study to inform an EULAR task force. RMD Open 2022;8\(2\):e002518.](#)

**About EULAR**

EULAR is the European umbrella organisation representing scientific societies, health professional associations and organisations for people with rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs). EULAR aims to reduce the burden of RMDs on individuals and society and to improve the treatment, prevention and rehabilitation of RMDs. To this end, EULAR fosters excellence in education and research in the field of rheumatology. It promotes the translation of research advances into daily care and fights for the recognition of the needs of people with RMDs by the EU institutions through advocacy action.

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