

## **Gaceta Sanitaria Policy to Promote Gender Equality in Scientific Publication**

Gender inequality is present in our society and by extension it is present in science too. Women are under-represented in senior academic positions and in scientific decision-making bodies. Because scientific journals are an important means of disseminating scientific results, it is important to promote gender equality throughout the scientific publication process. Promoting gender equality is also necessary because numerous studies have shown that women are usually less represented as authors or as members of journal decision-making bodies<sup>1</sup>.

Over the last few years, **Gaceta Sanitaria** has taken steps to improve gender equality, such as increasing gender equality in the journal's Editorial Board and Advisory Board and promoting the publication of manuscripts on gender inequality and its impact on health. This policy sets out the minimum standards that **Gaceta Sanitaria** must adhere to in order to continue to promote gender equality in accordance with the recommendations of the European Association of Science Editors<sup>1</sup>. It is hoped that this policy will also lead to an increase in the number of studies on gender inequalities in health.

The policy is divided into two main sections: the first detailing a series of recommendations on how to take sex/gender into account in scientific publication, and the second on how gender equality can be promoted in the way in which **Gaceta Sanitaria** is managed. There is also a journal editorial on this topic<sup>2</sup>.

### **1. Recommendations regarding how to take sex/gender into account in scientific publication**

Firstly, it is important to use the correct terminology and not to confuse the terms *sex* (which refers to biological differences) and *gender* (which refers to social inequalities), and generally to use non-sexist language.

The recommendations regarding how to take sex/gender into account in scientific publication in Table 1 below are aimed at editors, authors and reviewers. They are therefore also included in the journal's Guidelines for Authors and guide for reviewers.

**Table 1. Recommendations to take sex/gender into account in scientific publication**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
Names of authors	Each author's full name should be provided so that readers know whether they are male or female.
Title and abstract	If only men or only women are included in the study this should be stated in the title and abstract.
Introduction	This section should include some comments on the differences between sexes or gender inequalities that the authors expect to find (if appropriate). If the study focuses on one sex only, the reasons for that choice should be explained.
Methods	Explain how sex/gender has been taken into account in the study design. Ensure that there are enough men and women in the sample group, detailing the number of subjects lost to follow-up by sex. If the study analyses data for both sexes together, the reasons for that choice should be explained <sup>1</sup> . Stratify the analysis by sex when the patterns of association between independent and dependent variables differ by sex.
Results	Present the results stratified by sex (if appropriate). Analyse the men's and women's results separately to facilitate meta-analysis. Take into account the interactions that allow differences by sex or gender inequalities to be determined.
Discussion	Discuss the implications of the analysis of the comparison between sexes or by gender. If it was not possible to carry out this analysis, discuss the resulting limitations.

### **2. Recommendations to promote gender equality in the management of the journal**

<sup>1</sup> This refers to studies where limitations of the sample group mean that the analysis stratified by sex cannot be carried out, and to studies where such an analysis is not relevant.

Source: based on European Association of Science Editors, 2014<sup>1</sup>.

Establishing this policy already constitutes an important step towards reducing gender inequalities in scientific publication. To achieve this aim, **Gaceta Sanitaria** plans to take the following actions:

- Adapt the Guidelines for Authors to include aspects related to sex/gender.
- Adapt the list of checks used by the Editorial Board to assess the manuscripts submitted to the journal in order to determine whether sex/gender is important to the topic studied and whether it has been adequately taken into account.
- Include criteria in the guide for reviewers to ensure that reviewers assess the inclusion of sex/gender in the studies they review.
- Ensure that non-sexist language is used in published manuscripts (see for example *Guía de lenguaje no sexista*, Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia<sup>3</sup>).
- Provide editors with training in the importance of aspects related to sex/gender in scientific publication.
- Ensure gender equality in the journal's Editorial Board and Advisory Board.
- Ensure gender equality in the manuscripts commissioned by the Editorial Board (e.g. editorials, debates).
- Ensure that there are no gender inequalities in the indicators regarding how manuscripts are processed (e.g. acceptance or rejection, timescales or reviewers' statistics).

### **Bibliography**

1. European Association of Science Editors. Engendering change in scientific publishing: a common standard for sex and gender policies in scientific reporting and editorial management. EASE: United Kingdom; 2014.
2. Borrell C, Vives-Cases C, Domínguez-Berjón F, Álvarez- Dardet C. Las desigualdades de género en la ciencia: Gaceta Sanitaria da un paso adelante. Gac Sanit. 2015;20:161-3.
3. Guía de lenguaje no sexista. Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED). Oficina de igualdad. (Accessed 20 April 2015). Available at: [http://portal.uned.es/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/UNED\\_MAIN/LAUNIVERSIDAD/VICERRECTORADOS/GERENCIA/OFICINA\\_IGUALDAD/GUIA\\_Lenguaje.PDF](http://portal.uned.es/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/UNED_MAIN/LAUNIVERSIDAD/VICERRECTORADOS/GERENCIA/OFICINA_IGUALDAD/GUIA_Lenguaje.PDF)