

Female scientists in infectious diseases field: working towards a better representation and inclusion

Mujeres científicas en enfermedades infecciosas ciencia: hacia una mejor representación e inclusión

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In memoriam Angela Restrepo Moreno (1931-2022)

Representation and inclusion of women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) still remain a significant challenge. One significant indicator about this is that only 4% of Nobel prizes have been awarded to wo-

men¹. UNESCO Science Report shows that only some 33% of researchers around the world are women². Aware of the under-representation of women in science, in 2015, the United Nations General Assembly declared 11 February as the International Day of Women and Girls in Science³.

Infectious diseases field is no exception regarding the low representation of women. Our analysis of the database Open Editors found only one fourth of editors of journals in infectious diseases to be women⁴. A recent number of *Nature Microbiology* was devoted to celebrate the achievements of women in microbiology, highlighting some crucial developments of women in the field such those of Jane Hinton who developed Mueller–Hinton agar in 1941; Elizabeth Lee Hazen and Rachel Fuller Brown who discovered nystatin in the 1950s; Fanny Hesse who implemented the use of agar instead of gelatin in the late nineteenth century; and the Nobel Prize-winners Jennifer Doudna and Emmanuelle Charpentier who developed CRISPR–Cas9 genome editing tools⁵. FEMS (Federation of European Microbiology Societies) elaborated an infographic that included Nobel Prize awardees Francoise Barre Sinoussi on discovery of HIV and You You Tu who

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discovered artemisin⁶. Another article highlighted historical female scientist such as Ruth Ella Moore, the first African-American to receive a PhD in a natural science (bacteriology) in 1933, and to join American Society for Microbiology in 1936, who had focused on tuberculosis, immunology and gut microbiome⁷.

Infectio Journal is committed to improve the representation and inclusion of women, including in the editorial roles. In consequence we enlarged our Associated Editors Board to include more female specialists from basic (microbiology, immunology) to applied infectious diseases (epidemiology) disciplines. We inaugurated this new issue of Infectio with an Editorial Board composed of more than 50% women - as part of an international line up of leading scientists in the field of infectious diseases.

In 2022 we lost Angela Restrepo Moreno, considered the most important female scientist in the history of Colombia^{8,9}. We dedicate this Editorial to this eminent mycologist who was part of the founders of the Colombian Association of Infectious Diseases (ACIN) and who is an example for the next generations of women that want to follow her stella of passion and endeavor in the field.

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