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European Platform of Women Scientists

ANNUAL
CONFERENCE
2026

WOMEN IN HEALTH RESEARCH

FROM EVIDENCE TO INCLUSIVE RESEARCH AND POLICY

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30 NOVEMBER 2026

15:00 – 17:30 CET, ONLINE



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The 2026 EPWS Annual Conference will explore the contributions of women scientists to health research and innovation, with a focus on gender-sensitive medical and biomedical research, women scientists' leadership, and the systemic barriers that continue to shape their participation and advancement in science and research policy.

The conference will also examine the role of editorial policies and practices in leading scientific journals and scholarly publishing in advancing diversity, equity and inclusion. How can editorial policies foster more inclusive and transparent research and publication practices, and ensure that gender and further dimensions of diversity are appropriately considered throughout the research and publishing process?

Bringing together perspectives from medical research, science policy and scholarly publishing, the conference will explore how we can move from evidence to equity and contribute to lasting systemic change across the research ecosystem.



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-15:00 – 15:15 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION



PROF. DR. DR. BETTINA PFLEIDERER

Medical Faculty of the University of Münster, Germany
Head of the Research Group Cognition & Gender

WEBSITE

Bettina Pfleiderer is an Associate Professor at the University of Münster, Germany, with dual doctorates in chemistry and medicine. She leads the ‘Cognition & Gender’ research group, specialising in sex- and gender-sensitive medicine, functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging, and domestic violence.

As a scientist, she conducted research at Harvard Medical School's Magnetic Resonance Imaging Centre, investigating silicone implant degradation and detection in the human body. An experienced international leader, she served as President of the Medical Women’s International Association (2016–2019) and Vice President of the European Women’s Lobby (2021–2023).

Currently, she is the Head of the EU delegation to the W20 G20.

From Evidence to Equity: Integrating Gender-Sensitive Medical Science and the Care Economy into Global Policy Leadership

This presentation bridges the gap between scientific evidence and political action, advocating for gender-sensitive medical science to eliminate health disparities and improve clinical outcomes for women.

It examines the global care gap as a systemic barrier to women’s professional advancement and health, sharing perspectives from the work of the EU W20 Delegation on advancing women’s health. Furthermore, it argues that systemic change requires women in key decision-making roles across science, policy, and governance.

The presentation provides a perspective on translating rigorous research into high-level political mandates, creating a more equitable society through integrated science and inclusive leadership.

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PROF. DR. ŞÜKRAN KÖSE

Department of Infectious Diseases and Clinical Microbiology, Faculty of Medicine, Dokuz Eylül University, İzmir, Türkiye
Founder and Chair, Infectious Diseases Prevention Association

WEBSITE

Şükran Köse is a professor in the Department of Infectious Diseases and Clinical Microbiology, Faculty of Medicine, Dokuz Eylül University, İzmir, Türkiye. Her work spans infectious diseases, immunology, vaccination, and public health education.

As founder and chair of the Infectious Diseases Prevention Association (BUHASDER), she has supported community education and prevention initiatives for women, children, and other underserved groups. Her work connects clinical research with community engagement to promote more equitable health. She is committed to mentoring and advancing gender equality in science.

She co-edited Fifty-Six Women Who Changed the World, a book on women Nobel laureates with proceeds dedicated to girls' education.

Women Shaping Inclusive Health Innovation: Global Evidence and Lessons from Türkiye

Women help determine which health problems become research priorities, how discoveries develop into innovations, and who ultimately benefits. This presentation connects global evidence on women's participation in science and invention with examples from Türkiye and its scientific diaspora. It examines how women's rights and opportunities in science relate to inclusive research and access to innovation, distinguishing representation in research teams from the integration of sex and gender into research design, analysis, and implementation.

Examples from drug safety, medical artificial intelligence, mRNA technologies, and wearable ultrasound illustrate scientific opportunities and the need for careful validation. Drawing on her experience in infectious diseases, public health education, and work with disadvantaged communities, Şükran Köse examines barriers related to income, disability, language, care responsibilities, and place of residence. The presentation concludes with proposals for Türkiye–Europe collaboration and practical institutional action linking women's scientific leadership to participation, access, and health outcomes.

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DR. SOWMYA SWAMINATHAN

Director, External DEI, Research at Springer Nature
Member of Springer Nature's DEI Council

WEBSITE

Sowmya Swaminathan is Director, Global Inclusion, Research at Springer Nature. She leads Springer Nature's efforts to bring global inclusion to research publishing activities across the journals and books publishing programme. She was previously Head of Editorial Policy & Research Integrity for Nature Portfolio where she was responsible for policies and initiatives that advance transparency, integrity, open research practices and inclusion in scholarly publishing.

She began her career in scholarly publishing as an editor at Nature Cell Biology where she subsequently served as Chief Editor for 6 years.
Prior to entering scholarly publishing, Sowmya completed her PhD at the University of Chicago and carried out postdoctoral training at the Max Planck Institute for Biochemistry in Martinsried, Germany.

How publishers can support progress on gender representation

Women's representation in research has increased significantly in the last two decades. Recent data from the European Commission shows that women globally represent 34% of corresponding authors. There is variation by discipline and region with women representing 40-60% of researchers in some regions and disciplines. Nevertheless, across all global regions and disciplines, the gender gap increases with seniority with lower representation of women.

This presentation presents how Springer Nature is taking a data-informed approach to understand gender representation in the groups of researchers we work with, in the context of peer review and in the research we publish.

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