



Perceptions and impacts of gender inequality in the geosciences

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While young women increasingly pursue graduate and PhD degrees in the geosciences, the number of female geoscientists at tenured level remains low. The causes of this phenomenon called the “leaky pipeline” are diverse and measures to tackle this problem have often proven inefficient. The omnipresence of gender bias in science is considered one of the main drivers of the leaky pipeline. We perceived that our fellow geoscientists do not often discuss this, either because they do not recognize the problem or because they fear negative consequences of raising their concerns. Hence, to assess how geoscientists perceive and feel impacted by gender imbalance and bias, we conducted the first global anonymous survey on gender equality in the geosciences with a total number of 1220 participants from academia (67.0% female and 33.0% male). Our results demonstrate that both perception and impact of gender inequality are strongly divided along gender lines, with women generally reporting more problems with gender bias and stronger negative impacts on their professional life than men do. For example, female geoscientists are more than twice as likely to experience negative gender bias at their workplaces as their male colleagues (25.8% and 9.5%, respectively). They also feel substantially more affected by gender imbalance in their behavior at conferences compared to male geoscientists (58.1% vs. 24.9%). Thirdly, role models, and in particular female ones, are more relevant to female scientists than to their male colleagues (83.6% vs. 62.2%). Given these disparities, our study emphasizes the urgent need to address gender inequality within our community more actively and ensure a more gender-balanced and diverse representation at decision-making levels. In this presentation, we will discuss the results and implications of our survey in more detail. We hope to provide novel and useful insights, and invite everyone to discuss how to achieve gender equality in the geosciences.