

Scientists face barriers to engaging with public, but still participate in outreach

May 9 2012

Although scientists face a number of significant barriers to public outreach, some still engage in these activities, especially women and those with children, according to work published May 9 in the open access journal *PLoS ONE*.

The study authors found that having children was positively correlated with participation in outreach activities; most of the activities study participants were involved in targeted school-aged children.

Some of the hurdles academic scientists face include the perceptions that research, not outreach, should be their top priority in their role as academics, and that participating in outreach may hurt their research output. Also, some say that the public's disinterest or even opposition to learning about science discourages them from trying to engage in this type of outreach.

"These scientists perceive significant barriers to outreach at an individual level, within their institutions, and from the general public," said study lead author Elaine Ecklund of Rice University in Texas. "And though they think their departments and universities value research productivity over all else, these academic scientists still engage in outreach activities." Anne E. Lincoln of Southern Methodist University and Sarah James of Rice University were [collaborators](#) in this study.

More information: Ecklund EH, James SA, Lincoln AE (2012) How Academic Biologists and Physicists View Science Outreach. *PLoS ONE*

7(5): e36240. [doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0036240](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0036240)

Provided by Public Library of Science

Citation: Scientists face barriers to engaging with public, but still participate in outreach (2012, May 9) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-05-scientists-barriers-engaging-outreach.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.