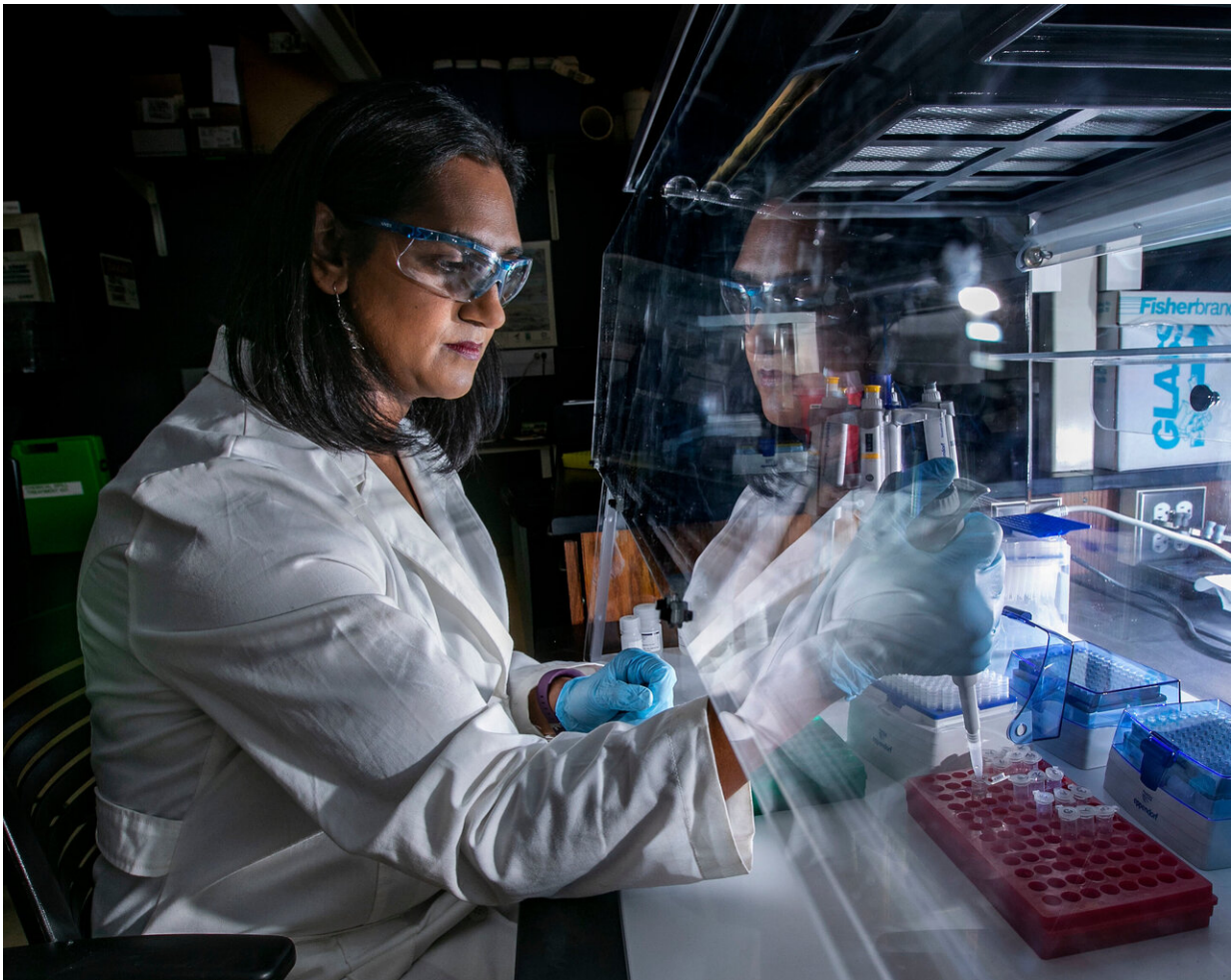


# How scientific leaders can enact anti-racist action in their labs

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Author Bala Chaudhary at work. Chaudhary teaches environmental science and leads a research group that studies mycorrhizas, beneficial plant-fungal symbioses, and their belowground ecology. Credit: Jamie Moncrief

A new paper provides 10 steps that principal investigators (PIs) and research group leaders can follow to help cultivate anti-racist professional and learning environments. V. Bala Chaudhary of DePaul University, Chicago, and Asmeret Asefaw Berhe of U.C. Merced present these guidelines in the open-access journal *PLOS Computational Biology*.

The science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) workforce exhibits disproportionately low racial and [ethnic diversity](#) due to a variety of factors that include bias, discrimination, and power imbalances within academia. The STEM community increasingly recognizes low representation of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC)—especially at and above the Ph.D. level—as a significant problem. Lab leaders may be able to make considerable progress towards increased diversity by building anti-racist labs, but many lack clarity on how to do so.

To help guide lab leaders who may be new to anti-racist work, Chaudhary and Berhe have developed 10 "simple rules" that can be immediately implemented. These rules include organizing regular discussions among lab members about anti-racism, boosting the voices and recognition of BIPOC scientists in one's field, holding leaders accountable for maintaining healthy workplaces, and cultivating flexible research agendas that may be more likely to amplify and benefit from innovative contributions of BIPOC researchers.

"The global uprising against racist violence that began in May 2020 sparked in the science community a level of interest in anti-racism that I have never seen before," Chaudhary says.

Indeed, recent events such as the death of George Floyd and the racism displayed towards New York City birder Christian Cooper have prompted many Black scientists to share their experiences facing racism

while working in STEM. However, science and academia have a long history of racism.

"We wrote this paper to help scientists who are new to anti-racism work identify tangible actions and connect with resources to encourage the development of a more anti-racist STEM environment that will benefit all scientists," Chaudhary says.

The ten simple rules proposed are (in brief) as follows:

1. Lead informed discussions about anti-racism in your lab regularly
2. Address racism in your lab and field safety guidelines
3. Publish papers and write grants with BIPOC colleagues
4. Evaluate your lab's mentoring practices
5. Amplify voices of BIPOC scientists in your field
6. Support BIPOC in their efforts to organize
7. Intentionally recruit BIPOC students and staff
8. Adopt a dynamic research agenda
9. Advocate for racially diverse leadership in science
10. Hold the powerful accountable and don't expect gratitude.

**More information:** Chaudhary VB, Berhe AA (2020) Ten simple rules for building an antiracist lab. *PLoS Comput Biol* 16(10): e1008210. [doi.org/10.1371/journal.pcbi.1008210](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pcbi.1008210)

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