

Study finds female academics less likely to win prizes, even when the award is named after a woman

November 21 2023



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A new study shows that female academics are significantly underrepresented in winning academic prizes and having awards named after them.

Analysis of nearly 9,000 awardees and 346 scientific prizes and medals published in *Nature Human Behaviour* has found that men win eight prizes for every one won by a woman if the award is named after a man. These awards represent almost two-thirds of all scientific prizes.

Female academics are, however, more likely to win awards that have been named after other notable female scientists, with 47% of those awards going to women and 53% to men.

Dr. Katja Gehmlich, Associate Professor in the Institute of Cardiovascular Science at the University of Birmingham and joint lead author of the study, said, "The [gender gap](#) between awardees in scientific prizes is sadly a product of a long, systematic issue of poor representation of women in sciences. Despite decades of efforts to rebalance this issue, our study shows that women are still poorly recognized for their scientific contributions, and men are far more likely to win prizes and awards, in particular, if those awards are named after other men.

"It seems particularly shocking to me that awards named after women still see more than half of prizes going to men because of how significantly skewed the data is for male-named awards, where men have won 88% of them."

"We further propose a list of actions to address and overcome these issues but are aware this will be a long process. The Nominate Her movement is one way that the [scientific community](#) can begin to address this."

Prof Stefan Krause from the School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences at the University of Birmingham and joint lead author of the study said, "Our data is indicative of much wider issues of [gender](#) inequality within sciences. Our current publication is an initial attempt to understand the causes of such striking gender inequality and to promote discussion on the subject within our scientific communities."

"Research culture has a lot to do to improve the gender [prize](#) gap that we see perpetuating to this day, as well as efforts to address the disparity that sees almost two-thirds of prizes currently named after men. More radical pathways may also be needed, such as renaming or getting rid of gender names associated with some [awards](#)."

More information: Katja Gehmlich et al, How we name academic prizes matters, *Nature Human Behaviour* (2023). [DOI: 10.1038/s41562-023-01773-9](#)

Provided by University of Birmingham

Citation: Study finds female academics less likely to win prizes, even when the award is named after a woman (2023, November 21) retrieved 29 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2023-11-female-academics-prizes-award-woman.html>

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