An analysis of thousands of children's books published in the last 60 years suggests that, while a higher proportion of books now feature female protagonists, male protagonists remain overrepresented. Stella Lourenco of Emory University, U.S., and colleagues present these findings in the open-access journal *PLOS ONE* on December 15, 2021 and explore the factors associated with representation.

A large body of evidence points to a bias in male versus female representation among protagonists in children's books published prior to 2000. However, evidence is lacking as to whether that bias has persisted. In addition, it has been unclear which factors, such as author gender, may be associated with male versus female protagonists.

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