

Creating resources for increasing gender equity in Parasitology

Despite efforts to address gender equality and barriers to career progression of women in science, women remain underrepresented in positions of power and decision-making across science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. Even with their contributions to groundbreaking research, women in STEM remain underrepresented among citations, editorial staff, and invited speakers. While closing the gender gap will require solutions across institutional and global levels, personal efforts towards addressing inequity can be advantageous. To address the underrepresentation of women in the role of invited speakers at parasitology conferences, seminars, and panels, I created and maintained a database of women who study a variety of topics within the field of parasitology. This “Women in Parasitology” database includes searchable keywords to identify areas of expertise, location, and contact information to facilitate connecting with potential invited speakers. To date, this database contains over 600 women from over 40 countries, including graduate students, research technicians, postdocs, staff scientists, and group leaders. To increase visibility of this resource, I used social media, specifically twitter, to reach members of the parasitology community. The “Women in Parasitology” twitter account (@WiParasitology) has more than 3,500 followers and highlights new and exciting parasitology research conducted by women around the world. Additionally, this account spreads the news of job openings and funding opportunities for women and historically excluded racial and ethnic groups. Most recently I have also implemented a “Tuesday Takeover” program to allow women to increase the visibility of their own research by “taking over” the “Women in Parasitology” twitter account for a day. It is my hope that the efforts of the “Women in Parasitology” community will help increase the representation of women at conferences and seminars within the field of parasitology as we strive towards gender equity in STEM.