



On Women in Prosthodontics: “While We Have the Chance”



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Three determinants underscored my decade-plus editorial commitment to this journal. The first two were the seminal texts of David Sackett¹ and Per-Ingvar Brånemark²—twin landmarks for the discipline’s welcome, if belated, transition to a renewed clinical-educational mandate. The third was my increased appreciation for the scholarly support from the female cohort in the IJP’s editorial family. I had planned an editorial on the latter topic wherein I would express my gratitude and admiration for their superb skills, comity, and professionalism, which have enriched my editorial tenure. However, a recent article in *The Lancet* made me realize that alerting this journal’s readership to its content would be the most compelling way to focus on the so-called “missing persons”³ who have the skills, heart, and understanding to enrich patients’ lives but continue to be overlooked. The paper—“Women in Science, Medicine, and Global Health: Call for Papers”⁴—is available online and can be reached via this link:

[http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(17\)32903-3/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(17)32903-3/fulltext)



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I realize that some readers avoid editorials and quickly turn to the pages covering topics that reflect their exclusive interests. Others, having been exposed to lecture room activities for far too long, refuse to succumb to the expected sermonizing. Nonetheless, I hope that both groups have lingered long enough here to read this introduction to the important subject matter covered by the *Lancet* paper. It discusses the many factors that can impede career progression and contribute to low representation of women in senior leadership positions in the fields of science, medicine, and global health, which include penalties for motherhood, additional difficulties traveling for conferences and field work, and the “old boys’ club” mentality, to name just a few. The paper also cites evidence of gender bias exhibited by both men and women in the workplace, causing women to be viewed as less competent and less valuable than their male counterparts.

It remains abundantly clear that fundamental societal change is required alongside stronger institutional policies and commitments within the areas of science, medicine, and global health. The IJP endorses the above statements, along with *The Lancet’s* call for



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papers reporting original research, analysis, and commentary to help create a set of transformative explanations and actions. But our required response and need to act may also be best summed up in the Samuel Beckett quote⁵:

*Let us do something, while we have the chance!
It is not every day that we are needed.
Not indeed that we personally are needed.
Others would meet the case equally well,
if not better. To all mankind they were addressed,
those cries for help still ringing in our ears!
But at this place, at this moment of time,
all mankind is us, whether we like it or not.
Let us make the most of it, before it is too late!
Let us represent worthily for once the foul brood to which a
cruel fate consigned us!*

All involved in enriching dental patients' lives should be cognizant of the exemplary role played by women in the IJP's scholarly cohort, together with the well-documented, even extraordinary contributions from other women.^{6,7} We men need to do even more to identify, nurture, assist, and promote other women to a similar standard. Dentistry—prosthodontics in particular—needs many more women of this caliber.

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