

# AutoCurious

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## Leadership and Gender

**W**hy is gender an issue for EU? And what has it got to do with academic leadership? For the participants at the AutoCure workshop "Academic leadership in Rheumatology including a gender perspective" held in Prague mid April, these questions are now easy to answer.



Professor Ingrid Lundberg

After two unforgettable days of engaging lectures, hard facts, vivid discussions and personal reflections the gender awareness raised

to an all time high, resulting in a list of actionplans for the future (see page 4).

The initiator of the workshop, Professor Ingrid Lundberg from Karolinska

Institutet, presented startling statistics and raised many important questions.

— More than 60 percent of the medical students in Europe are female, but only 16 percent of the professors at Karolinska Institutet are women. Less than four years after PhD 68 percent of the researchers in medical science in Europe are female, but only 36 percent of the experienced scientists and 15 percent of grade A staff are women. Where do they go all these educated women? Why do men publish more articles? And why are there still such gender differences amongst professors?

Gender equality is not only a question of justice, it is also vital for the global economy.

— This leaking pipe of female drop outs in the academic world is a big financial waste. These educated women are not reinvesting their skills into the economy and therefore it is



Around 16 percent of the professors at Karolinska Institutet are female..

### What is gender?

- Gender is the culturally created idea of differences between the sexes.
- Gender is a culturally created order of power related to the idea of female and male.
- Gender is one's unaware actions that are the result of power structure – and these unaware gender related actions do not aspire to change the order of power, but to preserve them.

Barbro Dahlbom-Hall, internationally renowned senior consultant and author of several books on gender and leadership

necessary to train and retain female doctors and scientist.

Ingrid Lundberg also stressed the fact that gender awareness is fundamental for good management and strategic leadership, also in projects like AutoCure.

— Our first target is to aim for 50 percent women among the experienced scientists in the project, the second is to increase the number of female Principal Investigators. Today there are only 3... We also need to discuss how we can promote and encourage young female scientists to take on leaderships. □

**AutoCure**  
- curing autoimmune diseases

AutoCure is an FP6 EU-funded integrated research project, with a translational approach to autoimmune diseases in the postgenomic era, using inflammatory arthritis and myositis as prototypes and learning examples.

## The Hopkins Experience: Small Changes Make a Big Difference

**Identify the barriers, focus on gender awareness training and always base your work on collected DATA, not on perception. Remember that even small changes can make a big difference and that men also benefit from a better gender climate. Professor Joan Bathon from Johns Hopkins University reported on the successful "Hopkins experience" that led to higher female salaries and more female professors.**

► Gender discussions often tend to become very emotional but when Professor Joan Bathon accounts for the gender improvement work that has been done at her university she sticks only to facts.

— The bottom line if you want to change gender structures, especially in the scientific world, is to collect data, hard statistic facts on salaries, appointments, fellowships etc. When we started our work we found huge salary gaps, sometimes around 25 percent, between men and women doing the same job. Only six percent of the department chairs were women and female professors and assistant professors were very rare. We decided to find out why women didn't progress up to the ranks, why so many of them were likely to stay at very junior levels, says Joan Bathon who at the time was a member and later Chair of the Task Force on Academic Careers of Women in the Department of Medicine and participated in the analysis of the gender structure at Johns Hopkins.

— **We have to** understand that both men and women operate under the same beliefs. Gender barriers are similar across disciplines and probably across cultures. Gender schemas are subconscious and many decisions are unfortunately based on these schemas. But it is hard to see the invisible barriers, the "glass ceiling" and the "sticky floor", she continues.

— When you work with gender you will often be told not to make a mountain out of a molehill, but many molehills



Professor Joan Bathon

add up to a mountain. All these "small" things, like women being interrupted more often than men, jokes and negative comments about women, the informal male networking, women not being invited to dinners etc etc, actually add up and form a pattern.

**At Johns Hopkins** they also found that one of the more obvious reasons for women not making it to the top was that they simply were not nominated for promotion by their division or departmental chiefs.

— The leadership structure in the academic world is still anachronistic and progress is rather slow but our work, which was a committed partnership with the Chairman of the Department of Medicine, initiated a few significant changes. To enhance the development of new women leaders we introduced yearly reviews of all female faculty's CVs, to make sure that eligible women faculty had not been "overlooked" for nomination for promotion. Our Department Chair also changed the medical rounds to Fridays instead of Saturdays and mandated that no meetings should be conducted after 17 pm. He also imposed a mandatory gender awareness training.

**The result of what** is now known as the Hopkins experience is that female salaries today are more equal to male.

— They used to be 25 percent lower. It has improved but female wages are still always lower.

In 2005 Johns Hopkins recorded an all time high of 18 percent female professors and 37 percent female Deans.

Professor Bathon who now is the Deputy Director of Division of Rheumatology and the Director of Johns Hopkins Arthritis Center underlines the importance of committed leaders to alter structures.

— Start to create changes within your own institution, show new examples of leadership, encourage an overall gender awareness and remember that very small differences in treatment can result in large disparities in salary and promotion over time. □



*We now have the opportunity – indeed the necessity – to assess anew the very structure and patterning of academic careers. We are in a negative spiral: we continually raise the expectation of excellence in both teaching and research, lengthen the years of preparation through postdoctoral fellowships, make tenure standards ever more rigorous, fail to dramatically alter the financial rewards available to faculty at all but the most well endowed and supported institutions, and refuse to adapt academic career patterns and policies to the needs of women and minorities in two-career families whom we are increasingly attracting. We are now presenting them with a Hobson's choice as they seek to plan families AND careers.*

*Put simply, if we do not change our own institutional structures and behaviours, we will make ourselves increasingly exclusive and decreasingly excellent".*

**William Brody**  
President of  
The Johns Hopkins University,  
Baltimore, US, 2006

# Gender Awareness Necessary for Good Leadership

**Culture, religion, race and social class are all very important but there is nothing that dominates your identity more than your gender. Gender concerns us all, men and women alike. Gender awareness is necessary for good leadership but unless you see the patterns from a deep individual level nothing will ever change.**

► No one in the audience was unaffected by the wise words from senior leadership consultant Barbro Dahlbom-Hall, who has written several books on gender and leadership and trained many world leaders in gender awareness.

In her very capturing lecture "Leadership and Personality" she shared some of her lifelong experience and deep knowledge in the field of gender perspective, leading to many emotional discussions and personal reflections in the group.

— Gender awareness is about knowledge, not emotions, she stressed. But working with gender is very threatening for both men and women. Gender is connected with control and power balance and very often there is a gender issue underneath a bitter conflict, not least in the medical/academic sector.

— Gender conflicts hurt because they always have an emotional impact. Some of the worst conflicts I have ever seen in my work have been in the medical/academic sector, she declared.

**Apart from having** trained many doctors Barbro Dahlbom-Hall also has personal experience from the medical world. She has suffered from rheumatoid arthritis for many years and lead educational leadership programmes for Swedish rheumatologist.

She also told the audience that many of her female friends from childhood, the ones that were very bright in school, became doctors.

— When I followed their careers



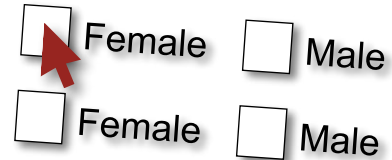
Barbro Dahlbom-Hall

**“**Today's leadership model is male but we are in a period of big change now. The weakest leaders are those who are afraid of women.

over the years and compared them with my own, I saw stagnation, not development. This made me so frustrated that I decided to write my first book – "Teaching doctors to lead" – which is about gender and leadership in the medical world, said Barbro Dahlbom-Hall who is also MD honoris causa of the Uppsala University Hospital.

Gender affects our personalities, behaviour and actions from the moment we are born.

— Bright girls talk a lot when they are about four years old. After that they usually are suppressed whereas little boys are encouraged to take space but on the other hand they are seldom allowed to show any feelings. To be praised a "real" girl has to be happy,



smiling, obedient and loyal. She is allowed to be clever but never brilliant and she should never question anything. If women talk about 30 percent as much as men, the men – but also the women – usually get the impression that women are "taking over".

## To understand gender patterns

is to be in a continuous process. Everything cannot be explained and it takes time, training and reflection to develop awareness, Barbro Dahlbom-Hall emphasized.

— For a leader it is important to see both your own individual pattern AND the general pattern. There is not only ONE way to be a man or a woman. You have to find your own best way to integrate gender awareness in your identity and in your leadership. You must learn to lead yourself before you can lead others.

— And to become a successful leader you must learn how to deal with gender conflicts.

**Barbro Dahlbom-Hall** stressed many times that society needs to be changed by women and men together, in a respectful dialogue.

— Today's leadership model is male but we are in a period of big change now. The weakest leaders are those who are afraid of women. Therefore it's important to work with and focus gender awareness training on men to prevent them from being so scared of women that they will try to stop them.

Accordingly, her latest book is called "Teaching men to live – the dilemma of leadership". □

For more info on Barbro Dahlbom-Hall and her work please see [www.dahlbom-hall.se](http://www.dahlbom-hall.se)

# Future Work within AutoCure on Gender and Leadership

Action plans and suggestions on how to proceed within the AutoCure consortium on gender and leadership

- ▶ Always include gender issues as part of the annual AutoCure meeting.
- ▶ Make it mandatory for group-leaders in the AutoCure consortium to participate in programs on gender, leadership and conflict handling.
- ▶ Hold this work-shop annually and encourage PI's to participate.
- ▶ Change PI's in AutoCure from men to women where possible and appropriate.
- ▶ Collect data by assigning a behaviour scientist who can make surveys, make interviews and initiate research projects. From there, we can identify objectives for the continuous work on leadership with a gender perspective.
- ▶ Educate colleagues on the results from above suggested work.
- ▶ Discussions on leadership and gender at Eular.
- ▶ Focus more on men + women instead of men versus women.
- ▶ Stress the fact that teams with both genders benefits the leadership.
- ▶ Make academic careers more attractive for women.
- ▶ Exert influence over Eular and respective institutions – initiate a dialogue.
- ▶ Measure accomplishments – announce and advertise.
- ▶ Mentorship programs (one on one) to have both gender and scientific dialogues.
- ▶ Gather information on men versus women in:
  - rheuma faculties within the consortium,
  - AutoCure scientists,
  - first and last authors,
  - chairs and meeting speakers.

## WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS:



▶ **Olga Krystufkova, MD, Institute of Rheumatology, Prague, Czech Republic**

— I was happy to be involved in this workshop. It is fascinating that gender mechanisms work similarly in different societies and places of the world. I have got a confirmation of some of my own personal feelings”.

▶ **Renate Gay, Professor, Chief of Staff, Faculty of Medicine, University of Zürich, Switzerland:**

— Gender issues are very important and we have to train BOTH men and women in this field. Its good to have small, concentrated workshops like this. It sows a little seed in everyone.



▶ **Paola de Pablo, MD, MPH, University of Birmingham, UK:**

— I have a lot of thinking to do after this. The data on gender equality in the medical world that were presented were really surprising to me. It all made me decide to try and change a few things, both at work and at home.

▶ **Tore Saxne, Professor, University of Lund, Sweden:**

— This has been a real eye opener for me. I now realise that the gender issue is a much bigger problem than I thought and I will bring the new insights back to my clinic and try to initiate some changes.



▶ **Tom Huizinga, Professor, Leiden University Medical Center, Netherlands:**

— I have learnt some interesting things about leadership during this workshop but more importantly the vivid discussions on gender issues have led to a decision that I will work more on my personal growth and development.

▶ **Fina Kurreeman, PhD student, Leiden University Medical Center, Netherlands**

— I have learnt a lot during these days. I definitely underestimated gender issues before and have not been fully aware of the complex norms and patterns, like the glass ceiling.





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### Objectives

To transform knowledge obtained from molecular research particularly within genomics, into a cure in an increasing number of patients suffering from inflammatory rheumatic diseases. Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is used as a prototype since this disease offers unique opportunities to define and evaluate new therapies.

### Work plan

- ▶ Potential key molecular mechanisms determining the course of RA and myositis are defined from genetic studies in humans, from relevant animal models and from basic cell and molecular biology.
- ▶ Predictors of disease development and therapeutic responses, enabling future individualised therapies, are developed with the help of our unique large patient cohorts and, biobanks.
- ▶ Development and evaluation of new therapies is performed using combinations of novel molecular tools and precise definition of disease phenotypes.

### FRONTER – for internal communication

Fronter is the internal web site for AutoCure colleagues. The site can be reached via a link at [www.autocure.org](http://www.autocure.org). In Fronter we put guidelines, programs and protocols for meetings, publications published or submitted, project scientific tools etc. You can also find contact information to all participants in the project. Files and documents that are downloaded can be protected so that only a minor group can have access to it.

For more information on Fronter, please contact Susanne Karlfeldt, [susanne.karlfeldt@karolinska.se](mailto:susanne.karlfeldt@karolinska.se).

## The Gender Workshop in Prague



The workshop on gender and leadership was held in Prague, the hometown of AutoCure-partners Jiri Vencovsky and Olga Krystuffkova, here outside their beautiful work place, the Institute of Rheumatology.

### AutoCurious

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