

PRESS RELEASE
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Gender and sex matter in research: Twenty recommendations from Europe's research universities

- The symptoms of a heart attack are different for women than for men.
- Female and pregnant crash test dummies lead to better vehicle safety standards.
- Highly skilled women have a higher risk of involuntary part-time employment than the general population.
- Research on fruitflies shows sex-specific differences in the neural circuitry of aggressive behaviour.
- The effects of maternal smoking on the unborn child have been shown to be different in boys and girls.
- Eating disorders in young men are underdiagnosed and undertreated.
- Gender and other factors have an impact on how we respond to climate change.

In [a paper](#) published today, the League of European Research Universities (LERU) analyses the role of gender and sex analysis in research and innovation (R&I), arguing that it needs to be better integrated into R&I funding, content and implementation process.

Why is it important? Gendered research and innovation (GRI) is an under-recognised issue: it is unfamiliar, not practiced, or not well integrated into the design of the research, save some significant exceptions, for example in biomedical research.

If GRI is not recognised, research can yield results that are less applicable to women than to men (or in some cases the reverse), which can lead to costly fixes later. GRI is important because it ensures that research results are equally valid for people of all genders and sexes, because it improves global citizens' lives in many ways and because it helps to ensure that research and innovation are in tune with universities' responsibility to society.

It is crucial that GRI questions are posed at the onset of research, so that potentially costly fixes don't have to happen later.

Who needs to hear this? Universities need to hear this: the university leadership needs to put this on the agenda within the university and with others outside the university with whom they interact. Researchers, who may or may not be aware of this issue, need to be informed so they can assess whether or not GRI is important in their research and act accordingly. The paper shows how LERU universities and researchers are dealing with GRI.

Governments need to hear this, and should include a GRI dimension in research policies and programmes.

Research funders need to hear this, and create incentives for researchers. They can look to the EU R&I funding programme H2020 as a model.

Research journals should set standards for including GRI information, with clear guidelines for authors.

What do we want? LERU universities have started to address this issue, but there is much work to be done. We would like to see:

- concerted and systematic efforts to raise awareness of and provide training on GRI to members of all research stakeholder communities.
- links to and integration with other gender equality initiatives at all levels: through inclusion of GRI in government policies and strategies, funders' programmes, universities' gender equality strategies or action plans, research activities and researchers' projects.

[The LERU paper on GRI](#) offers twenty recommendations for stakeholders to act upon, emphasising the importance of support, promotion and resources for GRI.

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About LERU

The League of European Research Universities (LERU) is an association of twenty-one leading research-intensive universities that share the values of high-quality teaching within an environment of internationally competitive research.

Founded in 2002, LERU advocates education through an awareness of the frontiers of human understanding; the creation of new knowledge through basic research, which is the ultimate source of innovation in society; and the promotion of research across a broad front in partnership with industry and society at large.

The purpose of the League is to advocate these values, to influence policy in Europe and to develop best practice through mutual exchange of experience. LERU regularly publishes a variety of papers and reports which make high-level policy statements, provide in-depth analyses and make concrete recommendations for policymakers, universities, researchers and other stakeholders.

The LERU universities are:

- University of Amsterdam
- Universitat de Barcelona
- University of Cambridge
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Freiburg
- Université de Genève
- Universität Heidelberg
- University of Helsinki
- Universiteit Leiden
- KU Leuven
- Imperial College London
- University College London
- Lund University
- University of Milan
- Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München
- University of Oxford
- Pierre & Marie Curie University
- Université Paris-Sud
- University of Strasbourg
- Utrecht University
- University of Zurich

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