

Recommendations for inclusive communication in health research

Written, oral and audiovisual

Hypatia Community



In general...

- ✓ Be flexible and willing to adapt your language to be inclusive.
- ✓ Balance the representation of gender-diverse people when choosing references.
- ✓ In oral communication, respect the turn to speak and avoid interrupting others.

Written and oral communication

Avoid stereotypical expressions with negative connotations or that exclude some groups, or language that may offend some groups)

- ✓ **Avoid giving a weak handshake when you are introduced**
- ✗ *Avoid giving an effeminate handshake when you are introduced*

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- ✓ **Ethnicity**
 - ✗ *Race*

Use inclusive terms, avoid words that use man when you want to include other people

- ✓ **Participants were exposed to high levels of human-caused noise**
- ✗ *Participants were exposed to high levels of man-made noise*

Instead of assuming gender, use gender-neutral language

Use *they/their* for singular words

- ✓ **A researcher can request leave from their group leader**
- ✗ *A researcher can request leave from his or her group leader*

Use *one*

- ✓ **A researcher in Spain earns less than one in Germany**
- ✗ *A researcher in Spain earns less than he would in Germany*

Avoid adding *woman/male* etc to jobs titles, but note that some titles like *midwife* are used for men and women

- ✓ **Women represent 45% of the doctors employed**
- ✗ *Women doctors represent 45% of the workforce*

Treat men and women the same way in texts and when speaking, including informally

- ✓ **What do you think about Dr Smith and Dr Brown opening the meeting? (or John and Julia)**
- ✗ *What do you think about Dr Smith and Julia opening the meeting?*

When referring to individuals, use their preferred pronouns

- ✔ Ask or include pronouns in introductions when appropriate, and use them consistently (*she/her, he/him, they/their* or even *ze/hir/hirs* or *ze/zir/zirs*)

Use people-centred language when you refer to people with illnesses

- ✔ People with diabetes
- ✘ Diabetics, people suffering from diabetes

Avoid using expressions with cultural connotations for people of different ages

- ✔ Avoid characterizing behaviours as unusual in older people
- ✘ *I hope when I grow old I can still be as fashionable and full of life as my mentor is!*
- ✔ We'll ask the early career researchers to set up the seminar room
- ✘ *We'll get the kids to set up the seminar room*

Audiovisual communication

Uses: Video, image, illustration, infographics, social networks

- ✔ Show the **diversity of research teams without attributing or relating a specific gender to them**, avoiding generalisations, rivalries, and segregation.
- ✔ **Balance the appearance of women and men** or male and female figures in relation to the total number of people appearing, the size and duration within the compositions.
- ✔ Show **women/men occupying roles in which they are not usually shown**.
- ✔ Incorporate the female voice, **helping to show and recognise women's successes and contributions**, their needs and expectations.
- ✔ **Ensure the quality of women and men's appearances:** approach, position, what each person is talking about, the role they play in the discourse, etc.
- ✔ Enhance the **protagonism of invisibilized collectives** - either because of gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnic or cultural origin, religion, etc., - contributing to **give a real image of the diversity of people** who belong in the organisation.
- ✔ Use images and create visual compositions to **promote a change of values** and break with **stereotypical images and clichés**.
- ✔ Describe the protagonists of the messages **without mentioning their body, clothing, skin tone or identity/sexual orientation**.
- ✔ Ensure that **icons/emoji are inclusive and plural** and that they have a neutral value.
- ✔ Opt for photographs or videos with **open horizontal shots** showing activities, equipment or people without focusing attention on any part of the body, or use **close-ups** to present people individually. Avoid high or low angle shots. Use images or figures with **diverse physiques (female and male) without sexualising them**.

For more information please visit the [extended version](#)

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