

## Editorial

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# Celebrating International Women's Day

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Congratulations to the all-woman editorial team for this special *JDOHaD* issue in celebration of International Women's Day. The International DOHaD Society, more than any other, should be supporting equality for women globally, recognising as we do that a focus on women yields life-long benefits for the next generation. Globally, inequalities between women and men remain ever prevalent not only in employment, pay and food security but also in respect, self-esteem and mental health. Our carefully designed interventions in the pre-conception period, or for pregnant women, to improve the health of the next generation are guaranteed to fail if we ignore these disparities, all of which are inextricably linked to health outcomes. If, for example, a pregnant woman cannot afford the transport to her local health facility, no matter how effective the obstetric intervention, she will not benefit from it. Women who are despondent, anxious or depressed are less likely to engage in our research, but these are the very people we need to reach, so we should attend to mental health issues if we are to succeed in improving physical health amongst women and their children.

Whilst bias against women in science has improved beyond recognition since the days of Rosalind Franklin and the double helix, there remains scope for improvement. One recent report suggests, for example, that women are less successful than men when applying for funding if the review criteria focus on the calibre of the principal applicant, rather than the science of the application (Lancet 2019; 393: 531–40). Inequalities between women and men in scientific careers also remain across University campuses, when women are often disadvantaged in career progression. I, for example, am the only woman amongst the six Heads of School in my institution, but the majority of our junior faculty are women. Perhaps my dogged attendance at 8am and 6pm faculty meetings had something to do with my appointment, but for many women this is just not possible. Recognising the need for support and change, the Society is determined to enhance career development amongst women in DOHaD research.

At our recent DOHaD congress in Melbourne more than 50% of presenters were female, many of whom were early career researchers. Together with the Trainee sessions at the meeting, we hope this may have helped a little towards achieving career ambitions. The 15 women at our Council table, all successful in DOHaD research, contribute to Society management and support of our >1000 strong membership, and the global reach through our 9 Chapter and Affiliate societies is unique. Through this network, *JDOHaD* and our broader membership of the Society is determined to highlight and redress the many inequalities amongst women globally, and within the research community.