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male society in which I live. A mentality that I struggle against every day, but which is difficult to overcome because it is so deeply rooted that it is also an integral part of us women. We are so used to a male context that sometimes we don't even see it anymore. Gender stereotypes have historically been resistant to change, rigid, and basically comfortable because they are always replicable.

## EDITORIAL

### We must do better

I have long thought about how to write this editorial. I thought that I wanted to write a brilliant, intelligent editorial, possibly rich in scientific content, and that doing so would make me appear to readers as an experienced and professional Editor. I thought of talking about evidence-based medicine, research methodology, or perhaps the philosophy of science. I thought about important themes, about topics that I could have dealt with to demonstrate my knowledge. Yes, I admit that I felt the pressure to write an editorial that would have consecrated my right to hold this editorial role. But why and above all to whom did I have to prove something? The honest answer is probably that I had to prove it to myself. Because unfortunately I am still conditioned by the

My father is a dentist, and when I started my professional career I thought that I would be a private practitioner and that I would practice in the family office with him. Then life took an unexpected turn: research and teaching fascinated me to the point that today I am in a full-time academic position. Ever since I started traveling for conferences, holding meetings and courses abroad, my father has always shown himself to be proud and happy with my career. Nevertheless, one day he said to me: When you earn more than your husband, don't say it, don't let it be known because this could become a problem. This "advice" coming from an affectionate father had certainly been pronounced to defend me, to protect me from any suffering. I never thought even for a second that it had been said to harm me, but the truth is that I have heard it ringing in my head all the years since then. Subconsciously, I felt that I should always have to justify my career choices, that I should have to hide and belittle my career because basically it is not a "woman's" thing.

#### Why a dandelion on the cover?

Dandelions are ubiquitous flowering plants whose name derives from the French dents de lion, meaning lion's tooth. The flight of the dandelion seed is determined by a stable vortex of air that pulls the seed like a closed parachute and carries it away for up to 5 miles from its place of origin. Thus, the flight also remains stable and dandelion seeds never tumble. This is a previously unknown aerodynamic concept of nature in which researchers see great potential for the development of technical systems.

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I was the first to laugh on several occasions when, at important scientific conferences, other speakers mistook me for the wife of a speaker without even considering for a moment the idea that I could be there to do the exact same thing they were there for: to go on stage. I ask you male readers: has it ever happened to you that a female colleague, before you went up on stage to make your speech, asked you if you were there to accompany your wife?

I recently read an article that reports data on the presence of women in science. The numbers are certainly encouraging and show a shift in mindset. There is a notable improvement in the presence of women who sign as first or last authors in scientific publications: from 5.9% in 1970 to 37% in 2014. In my country, Italy, according to a "gender research" report, 44% of researchers are women, a number that is behind only Portugal and Spain, where women represent 48%. Unfortunately, however, the percentage of women who occupy top positions in research institutes drops drastically, with a female representation of only 20%. Even within the scientific committees, women are underrepresented. Research published 10 years ago regarding 16 leading

international journals showed that fewer than one in four committee members was female. The composition of an editorial committee can guide the evaluation of the contributions that reach the editorial staff, both because the members of the board also act as reviewers and because they can propose external referees. Studies have confirmed that peer review is also predominantly male, and that male reviewers tend to clearly prefer same-sex reviewers, even if female reviewers are as equally available as male ones. In our own small way, in our journal, we are trying to change this trend. My role on the IJED is a concrete example of this. Our new editorial board is a concrete example of this.

I hope you understand why I felt the need to talk about myself, about women, and about the need for gender equality. I consider myself a feminist according to the definition by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: a feminist is a man or a woman who admits that today there is a problem related to gender, and that we have to solve it. All of us, men and women, must do better.

**Martina Stefanini**