

Men Cheat More Often

Male scientists commit research misconduct more often than their female peers, and senior researchers are more likely to engage in fraud than trainees.

By Dan Cossins | January 22, 2013

Males are overrepresented among life scientists found guilty of committing research misconduct, according to a study published today (January 22) in [mBio](#). The report also revealed that the majority of misconduct cases involve faculty members and other senior researchers, challenging the common perception that young scientists are more likely to transgress in a bid to advance their fledgling careers.

“Not only are men committing more research misconduct,” said co-author Joan Bennett of Rutgers University, in a press release, “senior men are most likely to do so.”

To get a better idea of the profile of the scientists who cheat, Bennett and her colleagues looked at the gender and career stage of 228 individuals found guilty of research misconduct—the vast majority of which consisted of data fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism—by the Office of Research Integrity (ORI) between 1994 and late 2012. They found that 65 percent of the guilty scientists were men—a figure that exceeds their overall representation in the scientific community—and that male professors accounted for 88 percent of fraud committed by faculty, again greater than expected given that men represent roughly 70 percent of faculty in the life sciences.

In terms of seniority, the analysis revealed that faculty members and other senior research personnel are responsible for 60 percent of the misconduct identified by the ORI, whereas students and postdocs were responsible for 40 percent of cases. The authors wrote that this suggests the National Institutes of Health, which currently targets trainee scientists for training in ethics and responsible conduct, should also focus such efforts on senior scientists.

<http://www.the-scientist.com/?articles.view/articleNo/34083/title/Men-Cheat-More-Often/>