How Sexist Is Science?

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When it comes to women and science, portrayals in the elite science media agree: The academy is sexist. Journal and grant reviewers, tenure-track hiring committees, teaching evaluators, salary committees, and letter writers all favor men. We read that “men are preferred to women even if they have the same accomplishments”; that “female candidates are half as likely as male candidates to receive an excellent letter or to have ‘standout’ adjectives like ‘excellent,’ ‘outstanding,’ or ‘extraordinary’”; that female scientists “earn just 82 percent of what male scientists make in the United States”; and that “women have fewer publications and collaborators and less funding, and they are penalized in hiring decisions when compared with equally qualified men.”

Are these claims of pervasive gender bias true? Few would dispute that such sexism proliferated for decades. But what about today?

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