



National Institutes of Health
Office of Research on Women's Health



The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Sex and Gender in Health and Disease (SGHD) Scientific Interest Group (SIG) Webinar

Sex As a Biological Variable (SABV) Policy and Sex-Inclusive Research: Making Progress, Taking Stock, and Visioning the Future

Thursday, November 30, 2023, 1:30–3:00 PM EDT

This Webinar is a special meeting of the NIH Sex and Gender in Health and Disease (SGHD) Scientific Interest Group (SIG) sponsored by the NIH Office of Research on Women's Health. The SGHD SIG aims to explore the influences of sex (as a biological variable) and gender (as a social construct) on health and disease across the lifespan. The SIG aims to promote the dissemination of research and foster potential interdisciplinary collaborations among NIH scientists who work on or are interested in, aspects of sex-based research across the research continuum or sex-differences research relevant to health and disease. The SIG also serves as a platform for cross-disciplinary connections.

About the Webinar: Three distinguished speakers will highlight progress and discuss challenges across three important domains of sex as a biological variable: (1) Importance of rigorous experimental design in biomedical research, (2) Transparent and inclusive scientific reporting, and (3) Sex-inclusive approaches as fundamental to advancing biomedical research. A discussion of the biomedical, social, and ethical complexities of sex-inclusive research will follow the presentations.



Janine Austin Clayton, M.D., FARVO, NIH Associate Director for Research on Women's Health and Director of the NIH Office of Research on Women's Health, will provide opening remarks. Dr. Clayton is the architect of the NIH Sex As a Biological Variable (SABV) policy requiring scientists to consider sex as a biological variable across the research spectrum. This policy is part of NIH's initiative to enhance reproducibility through rigor and transparency.



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Natasha A. Karp, Ph.D., Director, Preclinical Statistics, Quantitative Biology, Discovery Science, R&D, AstraZeneca, leads a team of statisticians supporting preclinical research. She is an active researcher and publishes papers about the challenges faced by preclinical researchers, with a particular focus on improving replicability, reproducibility, and generalizability of the studies. Dr. Karp has also published meta-research articles focused on: qualitative research into blinding in in-vivo studies, blockers to the engagement with sex-inclusive research, and the impact of sex-inclusive research on statistical power.

For more than a decade, Dr. Karp has been active in driving improvement in research practice, including the development of the NC3Rs Experimental Design Assistant. Dr. Karp is currently supporting the Medical Research Council (MRC) in developing experimental design recommendations that support the new Sex in Experimental Design mandate for the inclusion of both sexes in preclinical research.



Shirin Heidari, Ph.D., the Founder and President of [GENDRO](#), whose mission is to advance equity through the integration of sex and gender dimensions in research across disciplines. Dr. Heidari is also Senior Researcher at the Gender Centre at the Geneva Graduate Institute, Switzerland. Dr. Heidari established and co-chaired a Gender Policy Committee of the European Association of Science Editors, leading the development of the widely cited SAGER guidelines that encourage researchers to address sex and gender in research publications. She has also presented a [TEDx](#) talk “Why Sex and Gender Matter in Research.”

As a gender equality and human rights advocate, Dr. Heidari is a member of several international expert and scientific committees and engages in various efforts to advance the integration of sex and gender in the production of knowledge and evidence.



Barbara Stranger, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Pharmacology at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, is a member of the Center for Genetic Medicine and the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University. Dr. Stranger is a human geneticist with a longstanding interest in understanding how genetic variation influences molecular traits such as gene expression, and how this shapes phenotypic variability in health and disease. Her research has defined fundamental principles of how human genetic variation impacts gene regulation with a special focus on the impact of sex. Dr. Stranger has been a member of the NIH Genotype-Tissue Expression (GTEx), Encyclopedia of DNA Elements (ENCODE), and the Impact of Genomic Variation on Function (IGVF) Consortia.

[Registration is required to join](#)

If you have questions, please contact Dr. Elena Gorodetsky at egorod@mail.nih.gov

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