

Diversity in Biomedical Imaging and Medical Physics: The Role of Women's Interest Groups in Canadian and International Societies.

Several Canadian and international academic societies have recognized the need to become more inclusive and welcoming to a diverse population of scientists. In light of Black Lives Matter, many are giving voice to scientists who identify as coming from marginalized/under-represented communities in many ways: through advocacy and support in the form of scholarships and grants targeted to these communities, creating conference forums in which anti-racism and EDI are discussed, and welcoming diversity into their leadership. They have realized that they must fearlessly and intentionally seek out diverse voices that challenge conventional hypotheses, criticize traditional academic structures, and have a global worldview in order to better serve their members and the beneficiaries of the research they do.

Many societies have women's or diversity subgroups to advocate for these voices. Following is a list of such subgroups in major Imaging, Medical Physics and other societies in which many BIRC members are involved, and which BIRC strongly encourages young faculty and trainees to join.

It must be acknowledged that, while these subgroups have existed for years/decades, it took the brutal deaths of Black and Indigenous people at the hands of police and the healthcare system to move some of these societies to action. There are many online resources that we encourage you to read in order to know their names and who they were, and to understand the effects of systemic racism and misogyny in our society:

<https://sayevery.name>

<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cover-story/cover-story-2020-06-22>

In Canada, we have #IdleNoMore and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls report and calls to action <https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/> as well as the recent death of Joyce Echaquan through colonial violence in the health care system:

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-joyce-echaquans-death-grim-reminder-of-truths-about-canadian-health/>

Women's and Diversity subgroups of Imaging, Radiology, Medical Physics and other Societies:

World Molecular Imaging Society: WIMIN (Women in Molecular Imaging Network).

Website <https://www.wmis.org/wmis-interest-groups-main/women-in-molecular-imaging-sciences-interest-group-main/>

Twitter @WIMIN_WMIS

WIMIN started in 2005 with a small group meeting and has since grown and evolved to become the most popular interest group of the WMIS. In the summer of 2020, WIMIN ran a weekly webinar that focussed on the work of young investigators to give them the opportunity to present their work to an international audience. They give out prestigious awards to junior and senior investigators, and at the last WMIC, ran two events that addressed EDI: Ask a Mentor about Diversity, and Fireside Chats. The leadership of WMIS wants WIMIN to advise on integrating anti-racism and EDI in making the society more inclusive, and the editor of the society journal, Molecular Imaging and Biology, has invited WIMIN to author a series of articles on anti-racism and EDI in molecular imaging.

The International Society for Photonics and Optics (SPIE): Women in Optics.

Website <https://spie.org/about-spie/advocacy/women-in-optics>

Twitter @WomenInOptics

Since 1998, SPIE Women in Optics has been very active in promoting gender equity at SPIE. There is a monthly EDI live chat series, and a chapter, SPIE Photonics West, holds an annual EDI Presentation and Reception that includes an executive women's meetup, an LGBTQ+ social, an interactive Wikipedia Edit-A-Thon, and discussions on equity, bias, inclusivity, and leadership. The 2020 keynote for this event was Angela Saini, who spoke about structural patriarchy and racism in science. SPIE has a separate EDI committee that develops strategies to integrate EDI into the society; there are grants for childcare and diversity, and SPIE installed an endowed chair in EDI in Europe.

American Association for Women in Radiology

Website <https://www.aawr.org>

Twitter @AAWR_org

Started in 1981, AAWR is a professional organization for female radiologists that focusses on networking, mentoring and career advancement, increasing the visibility of women in radiology, and representation on the American College of Radiology board. Also check out **RAD Women (#RADxx)** at <https://radxx.ambrahealth.com/about/> , which fosters networking and mentorship opportunities for leaders in radiology and medical imaging informatics.

Here is an interesting talk highlighting the gender disparities in radiology by radiologist @drsherrywang:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rkMtfAOZYOg>

Canadian Organization of Medical Physicists (COMP): Women's Committee (CWC)

Website <https://comp-ocpm.ca/english/about-comp/leadership-governance/committees/professional-affairs-committee.html>

This group is now chaired by London medical physicist, Dr. Kathleen Surry. It is a standing subcommittee of the Professional Affairs Committee of COMP. They have a [Terms of Reference](#) that outlines their role and the responsibility of COMP to be directed in amplifying the voices of female medical physicists in Canada.

Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging: Women in Nuclear Medicine.

Website <http://www.snmimi.org/WINM>

Twitter @womeninnucmed

This nascent group has initiated some working groups for mentoring and networking, continuing education and communications. There have been a few special papers in their flagship journal, The Journal of Nuclear Medicine, on the need for diversity in nuclear medicine, but the women's group did not publish them.

The International Society Magnetic Resonance in Medicine: EDI Alliance

Website <https://www.ismrm.org/edi/>

This group within the ISMRM promotes EDI initiatives through conference workshops and posting of resources on diversity in the workplace, its role in innovation and improving the quality of scientific output. There is also a Women of ISMRM group (<http://women.ismrm.org>) that organizes conference sessions and webinars.

American Society of Cell Biology: WICB (Women in Cell Biology).

Website <https://www.ascb.org/committee/ascb-women-in-cell-biology-committee/>

Started with a small group of female cell biologists in 1971. It has now grown to over 1000 members, and is a standing committee of the American Society of Cell Biology. It sponsors career development programs, childcare and diversity grants, career advice and mentoring, and formed a Speaker Referral list to promote gender equity at conferences. It pushed ASCB to integrate gender parity in its keynote speakers in the annual meeting. They give out prestigious awards whose recipients include Nobel, Lasker and Gairdner laureates. It remains the premiere networking event at ASCB for all members. Now the society journal, Molecular and Cell Biology, is publishing a series called “Voices”, which highlights contributions from cell biologists who identify as belonging to marginalized/under-represented groups.