

Response to Myers on Participation of Women in Behavior Analysis: Right Problem, Wrong Source

Nancy A. Neef
University of Pennsylvania

Myers (1993) presents data on participation of women in (a) the *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis (JABA)*, the *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior (JEAB)*, and *The Behavior Analyst*; (b) the governing board for the former two journals (Society for the Experimental Analysis of Behavior) and for the Association for Behavior Analysis (ABA); and (c) the ABA convention. He concludes that women are underrepresented in editorial and leadership roles, presumably because of discrimination by "the men who control our institutions," and that "a basic issue seems to be whether we males will change our behavior so that we share opportunity and power and do not oppress or exploit women" (p. 84). Myers demonstrates that sex discrimination is indeed a problem, but is the evidence in the practices of our journals and governing boards?

Myers's findings of inequity are based on comparisons with the proportion of (a) women in the general population, (b) women in the membership of ABA, and (c) first authors who are women. However, in determining "adverse impact," it is important to ensure that the comparison sample is representative of the candidates normally available in the relevant market for the role in question. Because most members of the general population would not normally be candidates for leadership roles in behavior analysis, the general population should not be considered to be a relevant standard for comparison. (For example, relative to the general population, those without university affiliations are underrepresented

in behavior analysis.) Similarly, ABA membership is not a representative sample because the criterion for membership (payment of dues) bears no relation to the criteria for publication or editorial appointment.

The third proposed basis of comparison might appear to be more reasonable, because authors constitute the relevant group of candidates for editorial positions. These data, however, are potentially misleading because they do not differentiate multiple publications by the same individuals from single publications by different individuals. One might expect a higher ratio of editorial participation in relation to publication for frequent authors when compared to first-time authors. Thus, the candidates normally eligible for editorial positions are experienced authors with multiple publications, and it is this pool that constitutes the relevant comparison group.

Table 1 lists, in order of frequency of publication, the individuals who have had 10 or more publications in *JABA* as of 1992. Of the 36 individuals, 4 (11%) are female. Of these, 100% of the women and 97% of the men have served on *JABA*'s editorial board. Seventy-five percent of the women and 59% of the men have served as editors and/or associate editors.

Another source of data consists of individuals who were first or submitting authors on five or more publications in *JABA*. Of the 70 individuals meeting this criterion, 8 (11.4%) are female. From this group, 38% of women and 38.7% of the men have served as editors and/or associate editors.

Thus, using relevant groups as the standard of comparison, an equal or higher proportion of women has been represented in editorial positions for

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Nancy A. Neef, University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education, 3700 Walnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19104-6216.

TABLE 1

Authors with 10 or more articles published in the *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis (JABA)* (ranked by frequency of publication)

Rank	Name	Number of articles through Vol. 25 (1992)
1	*Baer, Donald	46
2	*Bailey, Jon	34
3	*Iwata, Brian	33
4	*Risley, Todd	29
5	*Reid, Dennis	28
6	*Van Houten, Ron	25
8	Hopkins, Bill	19
8	*Koegel, Robert	19
8	*Wacker, David	19
10	*Wolf, Montrose	18
12.5	Azrin, Nathan	17
12.5	*Kazdin, Alan	17
12.5	*Sherman, James	17
12.5	Stokes, Trevor	17
15.5	Foxx, Richard	16
15.5	*Geller, Scott	16
17.5	*Neef, Nancy	15
17.5	Repp, Alan	15
20.5	*Cuvo, Anthony	14
20.5	Fawcett, Stephen	14
20.5	*Sulzer-Azaroff, Beth	14
20.5	*Winett, Richard	14
24	*Drabman, Ronald	12
24	Hall, Vance	12
24	Schnelle, John	12
28.5	*Fowler, Susan	11
28.5	*Mace, F. Charles	11
28.5	*O'Leary, K. Daniel	11
28.5	*Page, Terry	11
28.5	Phillips, Elery	11
28.5	Strain, Philip	11
34	Berg, Wendy	10
34	Christophersen, Edward	10
34	*Greene, Brandon	10
34	Greenwood, Charles	10
34	Miller, Keith	10

* Appointed as editor and/or associate editor.

JABA. Of those appointed to senior editorial positions, 38% of the men and 44% of the women were not members of either of the above groups. (Of course it was not possible to consider publication records in the initial years of the journal's operation, and recognized expertise in target areas of behavior-analytic research is

also considered in editorial appointments.)

Where women have been underrepresented is as authors of multiple publications. There is no evidence, however, that this underrepresentation is attributable to sex bias in the *JABA* review process. For example, based on an analysis of editorial decisions for manuscripts submitted to *JABA* in 1982, Iwata and Lent (1984) found that the acceptance ratios for male and female first authors were virtually identical, and that the lower authorship ratios for women were solely a function of a lower submission rate. The same calculations performed for manuscripts submitted to *JABA* in 1992 support that conclusion: Women were first authors on only 30% of the manuscripts submitted, but the percentage of manuscripts accepted was 5.3% higher for female first authors.

In summary, the data for *JABA* indicate that fewer women than men submit manuscripts, but that there are no significant sex differences in the acceptance ratios. Fewer women than men publish repeatedly, but of those who do, an equal or higher proportion of women (depending on the standard applied) assumes senior editorial positions. (It is also important to point out that not all women who have been offered senior editorial positions have accepted them, and, as often occurs with highly capable individuals, competing demands of other leadership responsibilities have been a factor.) Of those in senior editorial positions, a higher proportion of women (indeed, virtually all) has served on the SEAB Board of Directors. Thus, any apparent differences between the representation of men and women in editorial positions in behavior analysis seem to follow from sex differences in senior authorship of multiple publications, a finding that extends to other journals in the field of psychology (Cox, 1977; Teghtsoonian, 1974). These differences are undoubtedly related to broader societal circumstances that are beyond the purview of our journals to address.

Although the data do not support Myers's claim of the operation of a "good

ole boys' network," sex bias is apparent from other sources of evidence. For example, Myers's own statements that an "[entitlement] strategy was apparent for [women] associate editors of *JABA* in 1976–1978" and that "the recent selection of a woman as *JABA* editor may also represent this [gatekeeping] strategy" (p. 85) seem to reflect incredulity that these appointments could have been based solely on professional qualifications. A comparison of the *JABA* publication records of the women and men at the time of their appointments fails to support this implicit assumption.

The hallmark of our field is a focus on behavior. Myers's recommendations that we use nonbehavioral criteria (entitlement approaches) to regulate gender composition of our governing boards not only fail to address the real problem of

lower submission ratios but also contribute to another by perpetuating attitudes that women's achievements cannot be realized through merit.

REFERENCES

- Cox, W. M. (1977). Some changes in articles published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology* during a twenty-year period. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 62*, 241–244.
- Iwata, B. A., & Lent, C. E. (1984). Participation by women in behavior analysis: Some recent data on authorship of manuscripts submitted to the *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis. The Behavior Analyst, 7*, 77–78.
- Myers, D. L. (1993). Participation by women in behavior analysis. II: 1992. *The Behavior Analyst, 16*, 75–86.
- Teghtsoonian, M. (1974). Distribution by sex of authors and editors of psychological journals, 1970–1972: Are there enough women editors? *American Psychologist, 29*, 262–269.