

Nanoscale Quantum Optics

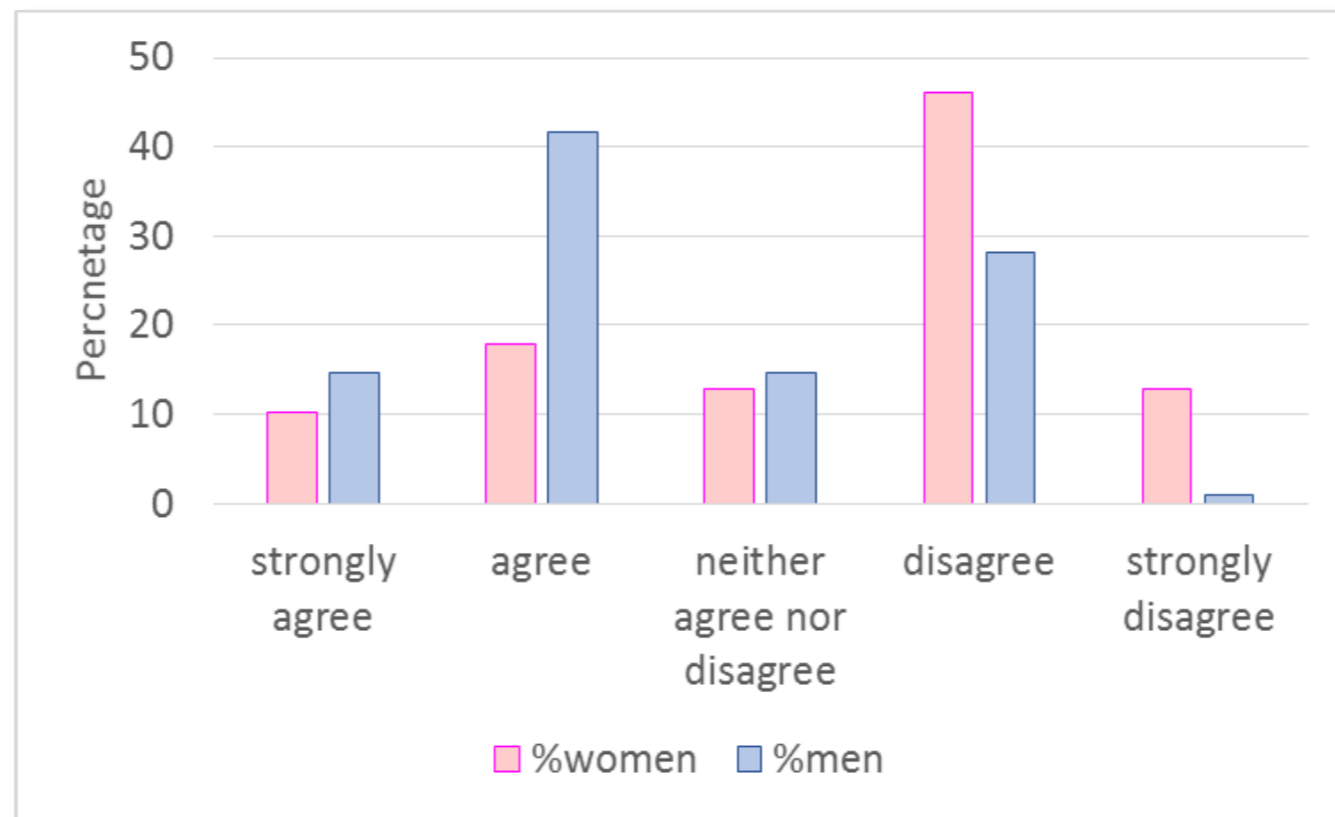
COST Action MP1403 — www.cost-NQO.eu

Exploring gender balance in a COST Action

- Gender balance advisor: Prof. Ruth Oulton (Univ. Bristol, UK)
- How much do scientists themselves know about these issues?
 - Ran a survey of attitudes towards gender equality in science
 - Ran discussion sessions with the whole COST NQO community at our meetings. Topics (usually thought-provoking and controversial) include: parenthood and academia, sexual harassment, affirmative action/positive discrimination...
 - Ran a second survey to see whether opinions and actions had changed

First survey (2016)

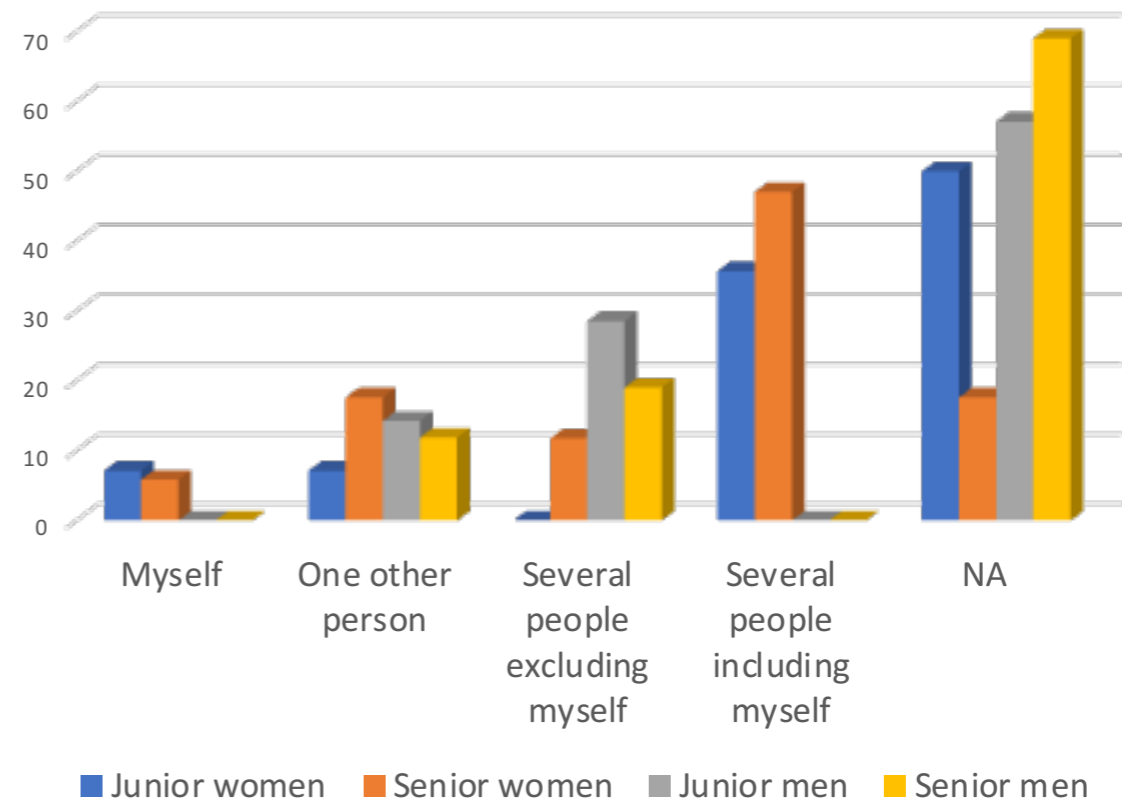
QUESTION: WOMEN AND MEN IN MY FIELD HAVE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR CAREER ADVANCEMENT



- There is a clear imbalance between mens' and womens' views.
- 64% of women believe that they do not have equal opportunities to men.
- However, 56% of men believe there is no difference in opportunities.

Experiences of sexual harassment

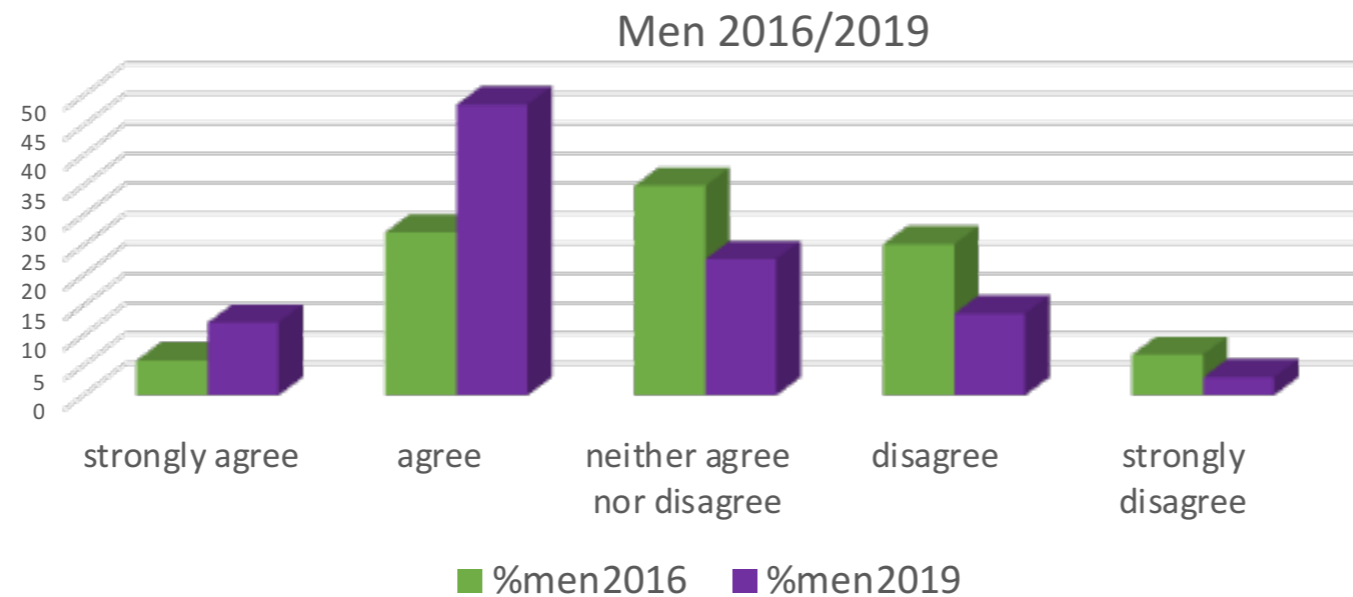
QUESTION: I HAVE, OR KNOW SOMEONE WHO HAS, EXPERIENCED SEXUAL HARASSMENT BY A PEER AND/OR SUPERIOR



- Almost half of all women (48%) report some experience of sexual harassment.
- Sexual harassment is an almost universal experience (83%) by the time women become senior.
- The experiences of the most senior academics was hugely divided on gender grounds.
 - 53% of women said that they knew of several people affected
 - 70% of senior men did not know of it happening to anyone. Only 20% of men knew of several people affected.

Did we change opinions and actions?

QUESTION: I PERSONALLY UNDERTAKE ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT GENDER EQUALITY (EG MENTORING, RAISING AWARENESS, GENDER SPECIFIC OUTREACH)



- Many more men (60%) reported personally undertaking activities in 2019, compared to 33% in 2016
- Women reported an increased level of engagement in 2019 (78%) as in 2016 (64%).

Conclusion I

- Male and female scientists do not agree about the importance and causes of gender imbalance
- Most scientists are not aware of the existing research on the subject
- Arm scientists with factual knowledge – we gave information about implicit bias and other studies during scientific meetings
- Encourage active engagement via discussion sessions: with an equal voice for men and women.

Conclusions II

- **Data collection!**
 - Larger survey numbers needed
 - Need information on female funding levels and participation levels, for example in Quantum Flagship
- **Inform, discuss, encourage**
 - Scientists need facts and data to be convinced!
- **Keep on asking women for their perspectives**
- **Allow an opportunity for free discussion on controversial topics**
- **Enable senior scientists and leaders to lead the way**
- **Ensure funders policies are female friendly**