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Why Are There Still So Few Women in Science?

By EILEEN POLLACK OCT. 3, 2013

Last summer, researchers at Yale published a study proving that physicists, chemists and biologists are likely to view a young male scientist more favorably than a woman with the same qualifications. Presented with identical summaries of the accomplishments of two imaginary applicants, professors at six major research institutions were significantly more willing to offer the man a job. If they did hire the woman, they set her salary, on average, nearly \$4,000 lower than the man's. Surprisingly, female scientists were as biased as their male counterparts.

The new study goes a long way toward providing hard evidence of a continuing bias against women in the sciences. Only one-fifth of physics Ph.D.'s in this country are awarded to women, and only about half of those women are American; of all the physics professors in the United States, only 14 percent are women. The numbers of black and Hispanic scientists are even lower; in a typical year, 13 African-Americans and 20 Latinos of either sex receive Ph.D.'s in physics. The reasons for those shortages are hardly mysterious — many minority students attend secondary schools that leave them too far behind to catch up in science, and the effects of prejudice at every stage of their education are well documented. But what could still be keeping women out of the STEM fields ("STEM" being the current shorthand



