

## Errare humanum est, though a lucky mistake, indeed!\*



### Errare humanum est, ¡pero afortunado error!

We were delighted to receive comments from Padilla-Navas et al.<sup>1</sup> on our article on gender differences in the publication of original articles in *Archivos de Bronconeumología*<sup>2</sup>. These authors disagree with our optimism in claiming that the number of women in the position of first author has increased over the years, given that when simple cross-multiplication is applied to the expected ratio in terms of the increasing proportion of registered female doctors, the percentage of women as first authors in the period 2016–2018, instead of 34.5%, should have been 37% if the previous ratio is maintained, so there are proportionately fewer women as first authors in this last period than in previous years. This compelled us to thoroughly review our data and, due to a numerical error that we still cannot explain, as this is the only wrong figure, we realize that we did indeed miscalculate the disputed percentage. Table 1 of our article shows that in the period 2016–2018, a total of 59 male first authors and 47 female first authors were documented, corresponding to 65.5% and 34.5% of the 106 publications, respectively. However, these percentages are incorrect, since 59 male first authors represent 55.7% and 47 women, 44.3%. That is to say, the percentage of female first authors in the period 2016–2018 was 44% and not 34.5%, 7% higher than the expected ratio. We attach Table 1 with this correction.

Aside from this “lucky” mistake, our study group and the Padilla-Navas group are united in spirit, pursuing the common objective of addressing an issue as important as the manifest gender inequality in scientific publications. One of the major limitations of our study was our exclusion of other types of documents, such as editorials, that are usually written by invited experts. Specifically, in the case of AB, we know that only 16% of the editorials published between 2005 and 2016 were authored by women in first position, and that this percentage did not change significantly in the different periods<sup>3</sup>. Clearly, the situation is far from ideal, particularly with regard to the authorship positions of experts or heads of research groups. In a more recent study on gender inequalities in the authorship of 24 Spanish medical journals indexed in *SCImago Journal & Country Rank* in 2017, which included editorials and review articles, the female/male ratio in AB was 0.76, positioning it at number 16 of the 24 journals analyzed<sup>4</sup>. However, in 2019, 35 original articles were published in AB, of which 20 were signed by women as first authors, 57% overall. Therefore, without any intention of offering false optimism, we consider it remarkable that at least in the field of original publications, the journal has witnessed favorable changes.

**Table 1**  
Gender of first and last authors of original articles of *Archivos de Bronconeumología* over the proposed study periods.

Study period	First author		Last author		Total
	Men	Women	Men	Women	
2001–2005	185 (73.1)	68 (26.9)	202 (79.8)	51 (20.2)	253
2006–2010	187 (68.8)	85 (31.2)	214 (78.7)	58 (21.3)	272
2011–2015	111 (56.3)	86 (43.7)	163 (82.7)	34 (17.3)	197
2016–2018	59 (55.7)	47 (44.3)	81 (76.4)	25 (23.6)	106
p-value	0.0001		0.570		

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## Authors' contribution

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## Conflict of interests

There are no conflicts of interest to declare.

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