

My career path

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Biggest challenges/ hurdles both in your career and beyond

- A day has only 24 hours!
- Being able to balance work and family.
- Overcoming stereotypes.



The key discovery that made the difference early on

Brief Definitive Report

Toll-like Receptor 9–mediated Recognition of Herpes Simplex Virus-2 by Plasmacytoid Dendritic Cells

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Recognition of single-stranded RNA viruses by Toll-like receptor 7

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REPORTS



Autophagy-Dependent Viral Recognition by Plasmacytoid Dendritic Cells

HEUNG KYU LEE, JENNIFER M. LUND, BALAJI RAMANATHAN, NOBORU MIZUSHIMA, AND AKIKO IWASAKI [Authors Info & Affiliations](#)

Were there moments of doubt/ facing rejection and how did you overcome these?

- Too many such moments to list!
 - Prevent the rejection from becoming personal.
 - Take a few days before responding to editors.
 - Remember that everyone has similar doubts about themselves.
 - Be true to yourself. Seek advice.
- 

What would your advice be to a young scientist starting his or her own adventure or journey today?

- Being a scientist is the best job in the world!
- Find multiple mentors and consult with them often.
- Seek help to obtain invitations to seminars, symposia, and nominations for awards, prizes, and other opportunities.

My outreach efforts

[Published: 21 July 2015](#)

Balancing family life with a science career

[Akiko Iwasaki](#) 

[Nature Immunology](#) **16**, 787–790 (2015) | [Cite this article](#)

World View | [Published: 09 April 2020](#)

Antidote to toxic principal investigators

[Akiko Iwasaki](#) 

[Nature Medicine](#) **26**, 457 (2020) | [Cite this article](#)

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NEUROVIEW | [VOLUME 109, ISSUE 19, P3041-3044, OCTOBER 06, 2021](#)

How COVID-19 has transformed my science

[Akiko Iwasaki](#)  

Comment | [Published: 19 August 2019](#)

Why we need to increase diversity in the immunology research community

[Akiko Iwasaki](#) 

[Nature Immunology](#) **20**, 1085–1088 (2019) | [Cite this article](#)

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World View | [Published: 20 June 2022](#)

Using social media to promote science

[Akiko Iwasaki](#) 

[Nature Immunology](#) (2022) | [Cite this article](#)



Prof. Akiko Iwasaki ✓

14.5K posts



Edit profile

Prof. Akiko Iwasaki ✓

@VirusesImmunity

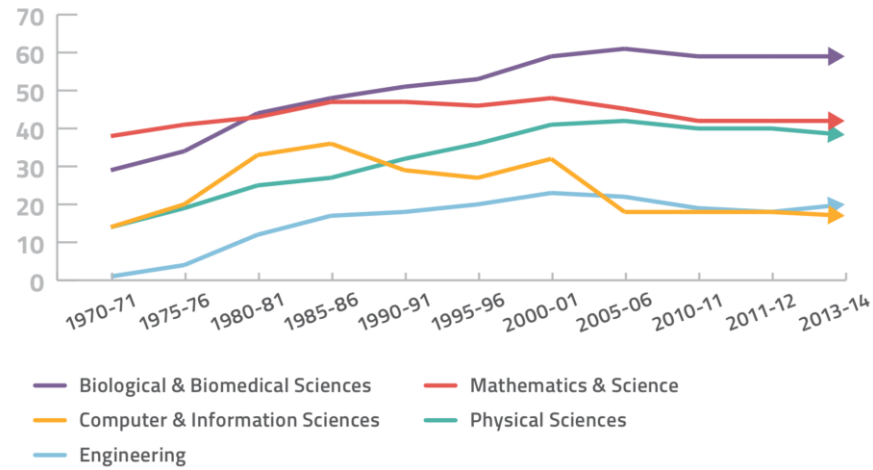
We study antiviral immunity and viral disease pathogenesis. #COVID19
#longCOVID #vaccines @HHMINEWS @YaleIBIO @YaleMed @YaleCII President of
@ImmunologyAAI

📍 New Haven, CT 🔗 medicine.yale.edu/lab/iwasaki/ 📅 Joined May 2017

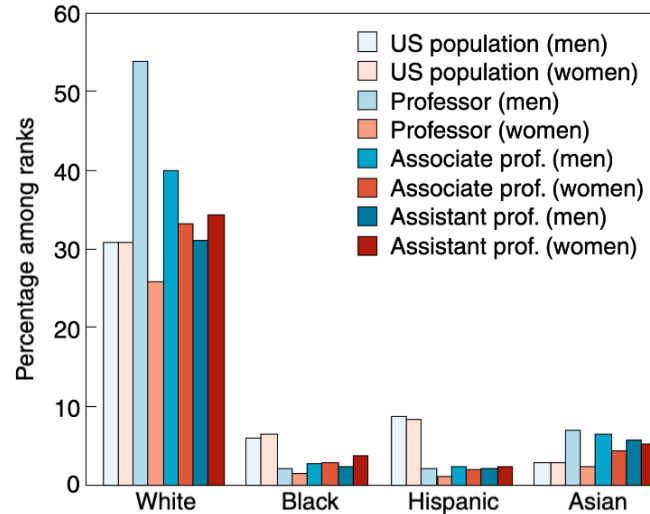
1,996 Following 221.3K Followers

What is the current state of diversity
in academic research?

A Historic Perspective: Percent Women with Undergraduate STEM Degrees



Gender and Racial Disparity in US Academia



Iwasaki, A. [Nat Immunol.](#) 2019 Sep;20(9):1085-1088.

Attrition of Women in Academic Career Stages

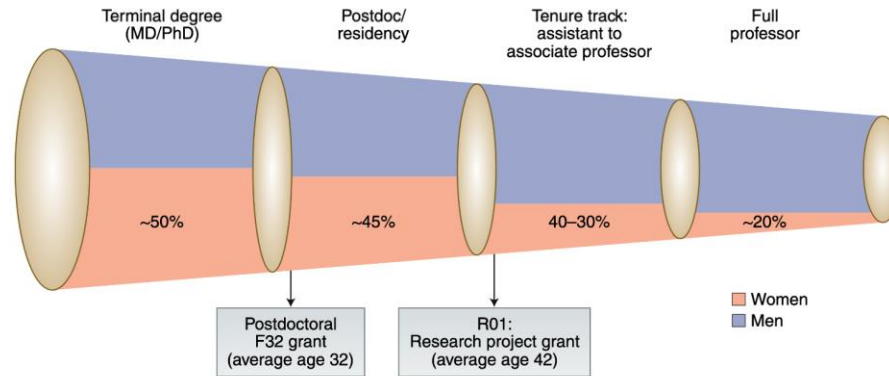
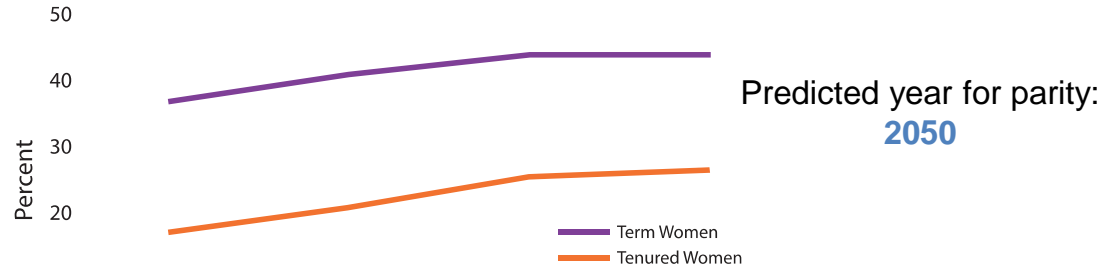


Fig. 2 | Percentage of women in career stages and typical timing of first F32 and R01. Figure from Marc J. Lerchenmueller and Olav Sorenson (ref. ¹³).

Iwasaki, A. [Nat Immunol](#). 2019 Sep;20(9):1085-1088.

If we do nothing about it....



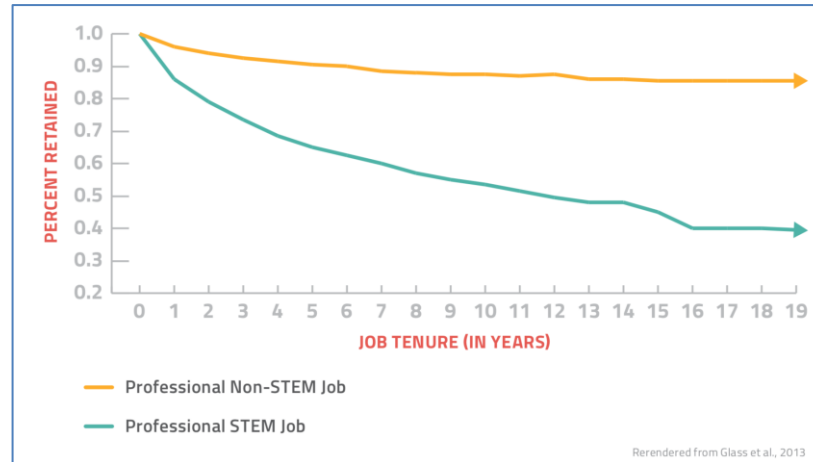
	2001–2002	2006–2007	2011–2012	2016–2017
Term	300/810 37%	393/966 41%	510/1171 44%	504/1148 44%
Tenured	144/836 17%	187/906 21%	244/1016 24%	293/1103 27%
Total Ladder	444/1646 26%	580/1872 31%	754/2187 34%	797/2251 35%

Source: WFF report *The View* (2017)

WHAT ARE UNDERLYING CAUSES?

Myths

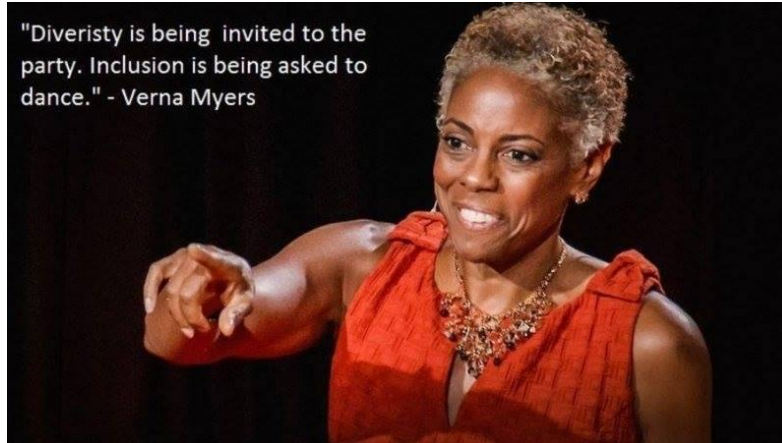
- Myth #1: It's a talent issue 🤔
- Myth #2: It's a pipeline issue 🤔
- Myth #3: Women go off to have babies 🤔



WHAT ARE POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS?

Diversity effort is not enough

- Diversity effort must be accompanied by inclusion and equity.



What can we do to achieve gender and race balance?

- Infrastructure
 - childcare
 - couples recruitment, cluster recruitment
 - grant panel education
 - mind set change in recruitment
 - change metric of success
- Tactics
 - Affirmation: band together preemptively to consciously support other women in discussion
 - Networking, identifying and hiring of qualified women and URM
 - Realizing this is not a woman/URM problem
 - Involving men (#HeforShe)

- Mentoring and role model
 - Women/URM in leadership roles could effect change from the top
 - Leadership – what should a leader look like? Act like?
- Policy and institutional solutions
 - Reflective: not just have programs; change mind-set
 - Acknowledge and tackle biases
 - Leadership training and mentoring for women, boards, committees
- Effort starts from one
 - A lot one can do on an individual level