

Championing change: A woman's journey in advancing gender equality in the pharma industry

Have you faced any obstacles within the pharmaceutical industry that were directly related to being a woman?

While I haven't personally experienced significant obstacles in my career due to my gender, during my career prior to Cerbios, I have encountered instances where gender bias manifested in subtle ways. For example, I have received inappropriate comments about my attire which would never be directed towards a male colleague. I don't believe that the pharmaceutical industry is the source of the problem, but rather the society we live in. This highlights the need for continued efforts towards creating a truly inclusive and equitable society for all, which will ultimately lead to a better workplace.

Who inspired you, as a younger woman and what advice would you give to young women aspiring to follow your path?

My parents instilled in me a strong sense of independence, particularly in my thinking. They encouraged me to pursue my own passions and make my own choices about my path in life. In general, my family members have always been dedicated to achieving their goals, and this strong work ethic has been passed down to me. So, I don't have one specific person in mind. The only advice I would offer is to pursue something you are deeply passionate about and dedicate

yourself fully to achieving your goals.

Much of the workforce has been working online or WFH for the past couple of years. Have you noticed whether this new way of working has improved or hindered the situation of women in the workplace?

I believe WFH has generally improved the lives of many workers, regardless of gender. Many people spend an hour or more commuting to work daily, and eliminating this non-productive time allows for better personal organization, particularly for families with young children or those caring for elderly parents.

How prevalent has outdated stereotypes or judgements been in your time in science? Have comments about women being unsuited to scientific disciplines and/or motherhood as a career barrier reduced or increased or has there generally been no change?

I think our society has made some progress regarding gender equality, but there is still much to be done. In the past, I have witnessed selections where women themselves did not want to hire another woman because she was of "childbearing age." Human nature can sometimes discriminate against those who are perceived as different, but social intelligence should lead us

to improve our status as human beings, trust that intelligence will increasingly triumph over instinct.

How important is that young scientists observe women as mentors, speakers, and leaders in their field? How much would that help in feeling a stronger sense of belonging and part of the team?

I believe it's important and reassuring for young people eager to enter the workforce to see someone who, starting from their same situation, was able to achieve during time his/her goals. A mentor's role is to impart the wisdom they have gained over the years to the next generation, enabling them to get a head start. This principle should apply equally to everyone, regardless of their sexual identity. After all, why should it be any different?

In your opinion, what can we do to increase female participation in the pharmaceutical/biotech field?

More and more women are becoming interested in the scientific world, including pharmaceuticals. I don't think we need major revolutions, but rather a consistent effort from everyone to avoid judging individuals based on their gender or differences. By actively listening to others, welcoming diverse perspectives, and evaluating them with an open mind, we can foster the society natural evolution.

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