



## A problem of practice

Science has a diversity and racism problem, which can only be addressed by changing our traditional academic practices — this also includes the way we handle and promote scientific articles.

Over the past year, conversations about racial discrimination have led to numerous articles and discussions about systemic racism and the lack of diversity in academia. It seems that the scientific community has finally acknowledged that science has a racism problem, and [it is time to be anti-racist](#) and to actively increase diversity and promote equity and inclusion in academia.

However, this attention to equity and the pledge to address racism in academia, which are long overdue, need to be accompanied by a change in academic practices — from training opportunities and [the way funding is distributed](#), to publication and citation practices. The way we traditionally work in academia itself creates a barrier to equitable access to academic careers.

Scientific visibility is one of the key factors deciding whether or not one can pursue an academic career. Visibility is inherently linked to publishing, as high-profile articles lead to recognition, citations, invitations to conferences, collaborations and awards; and they are an integral part of research funding decisions. Therefore, publishers and editors play a central role in promoting scientific visibility, not only by publishing papers but also by commissioning Reviews and Comments and by press-releasing research findings and highlighting the work of authors. Importantly, we have the opportunity to balance disparities in scientific visibility and amplify scientific voices.

In a [Viewpoint](#) in this issue, five leading biomaterials researchers provide action points to address disparities in scientific visibility, in particular with regards to scientific publishing. Tejal A. Desai, Omolola Eniola-Adefeso, Kelly R. Stevens, Maribel Vazquez and

Princess Imoukhuede write about their experiences with scientific visibility at various stages of their academic careers and emphasize that we all need to proactively watch out for opportunities to promote the visibility of the less-visible. They also highlight how the lack of familiarity with editorial and publishing practices can hurt scientific visibility. Moreover, they point out that publications from under-represented groups are often excluded from citation lists of scientific articles, and they ask journal editors to counteract such unfair citation practices. Importantly, they ask us editors to be stronger allies, as allyship is key to promoting scientific visibility.

Actions have always spoken louder than words, and therefore, we do not only want to write about it but actually adapt our editorial practices to try to balance disparities in scientific visibility. We will make it a point to include diverse referees, commission from a diverse authorship and promote the work of under-represented researchers. We will continue to publish articles that discuss racism and racial injustice in our communities. In addition, we will work with our referees to increase citation diversity, ask for feedback for how we can best implement citation diversity checks in our workflows and make it an editorial key task to check that reference lists are fair and balanced.

We also want to learn from our authorship and readership to ensure that we do not overlook contributions from under-represented researchers, so please do reach out to us and let us know about seminars or conferences we should attend, researchers we should be aware of and areas we should consider.

Here is to a willingness to change and to actual change.