

Women in Physics in Spain: Changes since 2002

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The Spanish team attending the IUPAP 2002 Conference first translated to Spanish, published and spread the recommendations of the Conference. Secondly, the team managed to form a division “Women in Physics” in the Spanish Physical Society (RSEF) in December 2002. This division has developed the following activities:

- 2003: A round table about “Women in Science” was organized inside the Conference celebrating the first “hundred years” of the RSEF. It is the first time that the gender issue has been addressed in a meeting of the RSEF. The closing of the Conference was made by a women physicist, the only woman invited for plenary conferences. A study about the IUPAP Conference analysing the status of women in Physics in Spain was published in the Journal of the RSEF.

- 2004: A workshop about “Development of the professional career of women in Physics in Spain” followed by 65 persons.

- 2005: M.J. Yzuel, member of the women division was invited to give a conference in the opening ceremony of the “Physics Year” held in the Spanish parliament. She addressed the women status in physics besides her own speciality. In January, 2005, a book about the pioneering women of experimental sciences in Spain was published by the CSIC. Several members of the group are being invited to give conferences in different universities and institutions about the women in Physics status. At present we are involved in the organization of a session in the general conference of the RSEF due to take place in September 2005.

During these three years, the recommendations made by the European Commission (EC) to improve women situation in science have produced some changes in the academic life. In 2004, the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science has published gender disaggregated statistics of the staff of the Spanish universities. The Spanish Research Council (CSIC) has established an Advisory Committee on “Women in Science” and publishes periodically the gender disaggregated statistics of the scientific staff. The Spanish Government has approved equality measurements on the 8th March 2005 directed to improve the status of women in the society. These measurements will affect the composition of the evaluation panels to hire and promote scientific personnel of the universities and public research organizations.

During July, 2001, a group of scientist women introduced a private nationwide association for scientific and technological women, AMIT (300 members), to fight for the women rights and equity in the different scientific specialities. Thanks to the activities of this association, the Ministry of Education and Science has created a new division to work in the women and science issue.

Another important achievement was the recognition of the maternity leave for the doctoral scholarships thanks to the activities developed by the doctoral scholarship association

Table 1 and Table 2 show the evolution of the percentage of women at the different levels existing into the two most relevant scientific organizations in our country: the CSIC and the Universities.

We compare the data that were published at the first IUPAP Conference with current data. Data from the CSIC (Table 1) show that women status has improved. The total number of women remains practically the same but it could be appreciated more women in the top positions. However, the percentage of women relative to the total number of scientists is the same for all the levels.

In Table 2, the percentage of women is given for all the fields and for the physics departments at the universities. Both set of data show the same trend of a slight increase of the percentage of women in all the levels considered. In the case of the physics departments, the number of women is lowest and the differences in respect to the global numbers seem to keep or to be slightly higher.

Table 1. Evolution of the percentage of women at each staff level of the CSIC for the Physics Sciences and Technology fields ¹ .				
LEVELS	Relative to the total number of scientists		Relative to the total number of women	
	2001	2005	2001	2005
Professor of Research	5.1	5.9	3.4	4.7
Scientist Research	21.6	29.5	19.6	29.0
Scientist	33.3	34.0	77.0	66.3
TOTAL	25.8	26.7	100	100

Table 2. Evolution of the percentage of women at each level of the universities ^{2,3}		
WOMEN FACULTY MEMBERS (ALL FIELDS). ACADEMIC YEAR		
LEVELS	1997/1998	2003/2004
Full professors and professors	30.9%	32.3%
Professors under temporary contract	32.7%	34.8%
Assistant professors	42.5%	43.7%
TOTAL	33.3%	33.9%
WOMEN FACULTY MEMBERS IN THE PHYSICS DEPARTMENTS. ACADEMIC YEAR		
LEVELS	1997/98	2003/2004
Full professors	2.9%	5.6%
Professors	25.2%	26.7%
Professors under temporary contract	21.7%	23.9%
Assistant professors	27.9%	23.2%
TOTAL	21.0 %	22.2%

The number of female students (Table 3) of the physics degree has increased during this period although the increase is not as relevant as in other cases.

Table 3. Evolution of the female students in the experimental degrees ³		
	1998/99	2003/2004
• Chemistry	57.7	66.1
• Biology	63.3	70.4
• Physics	29.9	33.1
• Mathematics	52.1	53.5
• Other	56.9	33.4
Total:	54.2	50

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