Reviewer's report

Title: Analysis of sex and gender-specific research reveals a common increase in publications and marked differences between disciplines

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Reviewer: Marianne Legato

Reviewer's report:

This is a very interesting and well done piece of work. It is thoughtfully planned and the results/discussion portion is intelligent and provocative. I have the following suggestions:

1. Methods: a fuller and more detailed description of the “test-mining algorithm based on the Lucerne platform-reference 14” would be most helpful to the reader, who otherwise has to retrieve and understand reference 14. I would consider this a useful but not a major compulsory revision.

These are my suggestions for discretionary revisions which I think would help the usefulness of this paper:

2. Are the terms "sex" and "gender" used interchangeably by the authors in their search methodology? If so, this deserves some comment as to the rationale of doing so. Some disciplines might be more weighted to studying the impact of biological sex and others (like cardiology for example) more that of gender. This may be essentially an impossible separation or characterization to make, I realize, but I'd like to hear the authors' opinions about it in the body of the discussion.

3. I thought the illustration were very useful and helped show in graphic form the important points the authors wanted to make about our progress in incorporating gender-specific analysis into scientific reports. The distribution of types of studies was interesting, as was the split between human and animal studies.

4. It would be worth the authors consulting the very early papers that dealt with the subject of gender-specific investigation in the scientific literature. I would specifically recommend Charney and Morgan, Journal of Women's Health 5:(6). 579.1996 and Markatz's editorial on that paper in the same issue (Merkatz R. Journal of Women's Health 5(6) Lp525.1996. While the sources used for this early work were only three American journals, I think the comparison between that first important analysis and this might be useful in terms of measuring our progress in successfully incorporating sex/gender as an important variable in investigation.

5. Finally, I would like to see a set of specific recommendations as to which disciplines needed the most improvement and in what particular types of investigation, i.e., animal studies, human studies, etc.) that looked at sex/gender were most -and least-abundant. While this is discussed in the paper, I think a summary set of what fields and what kind of investigation need improvement and which have been most successful to date would be a very useful addition to the
form of the report.

**Which journal?:** Appropriate or potentially appropriate for BMC Medicine: an article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

**What next?:** Accept for publication in BMC Medicine after discretionary revisions

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.