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Women and Physics: Why so few?

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Abstract content (Max 300 words)
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Women are greatly under-represented in physics. Among all sciences, physics is the field where the increase in the number of women has been particularly slow. Because of this imbalance, many bright young people do not receive the opportunity to learn about physics and to prepare themselves for a physics career, and others are discouraged from doing so. However, the problem is not only that girls are discouraged to go to physics, they run away from it. Women will leave physics disproportionately with each step of career advance, which has been described in the US reports as the “leaky pipeline” or in the European Studies as the “seizors effect”. But, why should we care about this problem? Why should women be in physics after all? Women that have a passion for physics should be able to make a living and have a successful career in this field. But, the need of gender balance in science, it is not only a equal opportunity issue. Physics need a greater participation of female researchers in order to survive. Science is changing and it is becoming more interdisciplinary. This evolution is only possible through diversity of thought and of strategies to approach problems. Therefore, excluding women more than limiting the available pool of talented people to half of humanity, we are limiting diversity. Finally, in a society where technology is governing our everyday life and where women are highly involved in the educational process, exposing women to science generates a more scientific literate public. In this talk we present statistics not only illustrating the lack of women in physics but also how the numbers are even worst at the top level of the career. Some good practices are illustrate.

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no

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yes

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