

The Leaky Pipeline and Age Discrimination *European Gender Summit*

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A scientific career in 21st Century

Australian experience - age and science careers:

- Progression as early career researcher can be accelerated by mobility; difficult for some women
- The “rush hour” (Caprile, 2012; also Cory, 2011) when career and family collide for women in early 30s
- Becoming an independent researcher depends on networks/ mobility/mentoring – gender differences
- 40 papers by 40 to be awarded a senior fellowship
- Career plateauing (Riordan, 2011) of some over 50s





Australian science funding model

- **Most funding from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)**
- **Funding decisions often random (Graves et al., 2011)**
- **Lack of job security**
- **No effective assessment of output relative to opportunity**
- **No separate funding for career interruptions**



Leaky Pipeline: Australian case study

Occupational category	Total Employees /students 2011			Total Employees /students 2010		
	F	M	%F	F	M	%F
Research Fellows	3	21	14	1	21	5
Senior Research Officers	17	13	57	23	14	62
Research Officers	13	14	48	13	14	48
PhD Students	48	22	69	48	22	67





Passion for “doing science”

- **Passionate and single-minded – akin to a religious vocation**
- **Job satisfaction: excitement of being at new frontiers of science, rather than guidance or financial reward (cf. *Nature* survey 2010)**
- **This ‘ideal scientist’ a ‘monastic male’ with no other responsibility than “doing science” i.e. normative male model of a scientist (Moir, 2006) – impact on perception of the model of a women scientist**



Women just as passionate about science



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Generational change and gender

Most significant finding:

- **The construct of masculinity on which science excellence is based is out-dated**
- **More fluid roles for women and men emerging**
- **Both younger women and men reject overt gender discrimination**



Generational change



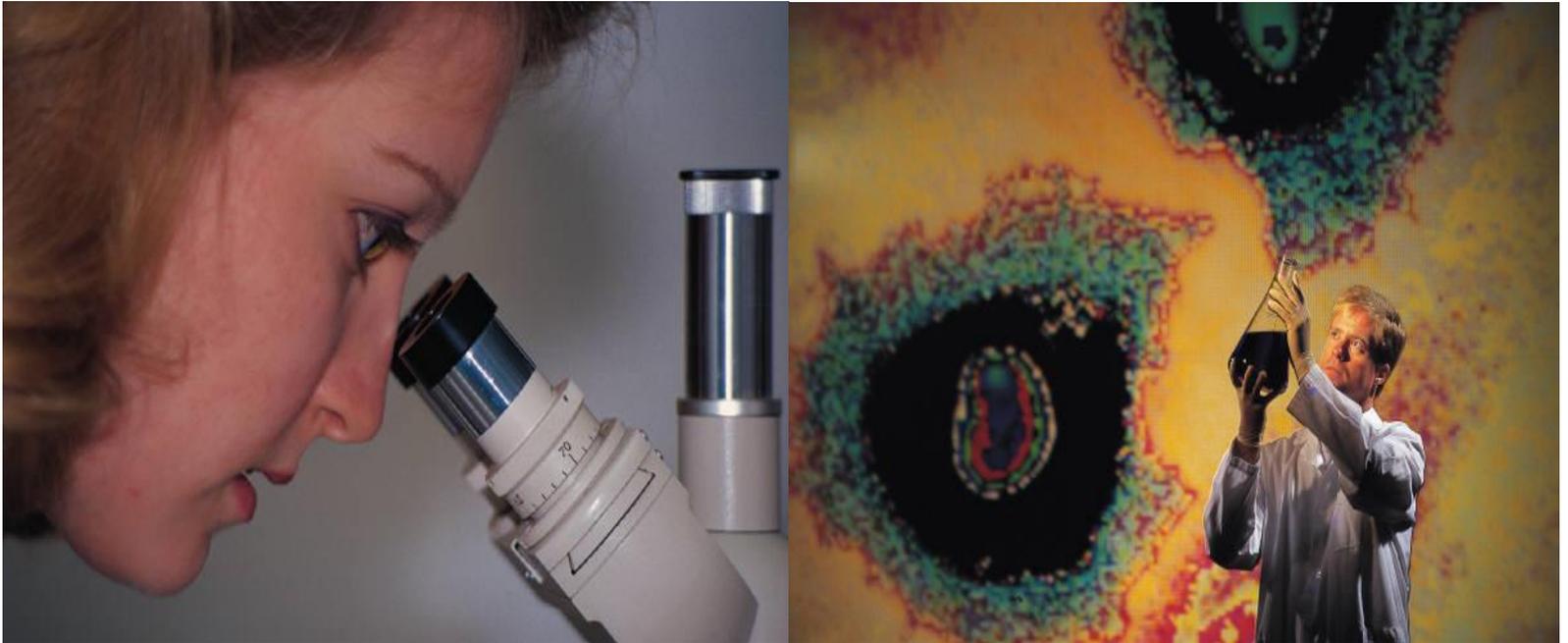


Generational change and gender

- **Younger women challenging gendered organisational culture/funding model in order to balance work/family/career progression; some delayed having children**
- **Others chose to return to work part-time and insisted that managers/colleagues respect their decision and not ‘side-line’ them**
- **Younger men challenging organisational culture – reject competitive funding model; juggling work/dual careers/children; or wish to work less when they have children**



Respect and support for working part-time



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New inclusive models

- **Political imperative to keep young women and men in science research to increase Australian competitiveness/innovation**
- **Reform of funding model overdue**
- **Support from Institute for women and men for flexible work models**
- **Leadership from supervisors critical in developing new models of “doing science”**



New models needed for science careers



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Conclusion

Basic science research careers gendered:

- **Women with family responsibilities experience less support and greater challenges than men in building careers**
- **Single women/women with families can also experience direct/indirect discrimination in relation to work practices and networking**
- **Younger women and men reject the science construct of masculinity, seek new models**



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