

PRESS RELEASE

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The ALBA Network outlines key actions to improve the global inclusion, visibility and success of Latin American neuroscientists

In a new commentary published in Nature Neuroscience (Volume 25 Issue 9, September 2022), members of the ALBA Network review the challenges currently faced by the Latin American (neuro)science community and recommend actions on multiple fronts to close the opportunity gap.

Despite high research output from the region, inequities arising from economic and political instability as well as sociocultural biases significantly reduce the impact of their scientific contributions on the global stage. Limited federal R&D spending and uneven access to educational opportunities have a negative impact on local research infrastructure, affordability and access to international conferences and publishing, and English language proficiency. It is harder for women and LGBTQ+ individuals to successfully build a neuroscience career in Latin America due to implicit bias against women and sexual and gender minorities, gender differences in education paths, restrictive gender norms and religious influence in the region.

The ALBA Network strongly advocates for cultivating diverse and inclusive neuroscience workforces and research cultures through intersectoral collaboration. In particular, the region-specific challenges in Latin America need customised solutions such as regional and quantitative diversity data collection, institutional support and advocacy of increased representation and career advancement for women and LGBTQ+ scientists in a safe workplace free of harassment, increased financial support and research investment, comprehensive scientific training and mentoring, and dismantling of the English language dominance among academic and scientific circles.

“The Latin American Neuroscience community faces specific barriers that prevent the achievement of its full potential and its full development to contribute in equal conditions with the rest of the international community. This work provides objective data to move from awareness to action.”, said Prof. Ana Silva, senior author of the commentary.

This commentary builds upon a 2020 study on gender inequities in the region by the Latin American Regional Committee of IBRO (IBRO-LARC) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)¹ and a subsequent ALBA webinar in 2021 discussing the main barriers to succeed in brain sciences in Latin America².

¹ <https://ibro.org/evaluation-of-gender-inequities-in-the-latin-american-neuroscience-community/>

² <https://www.alba.network/alba-webinar-series-region-specific-issues>

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The [ALBA Network](#) aims to promote equity and diversity in the brain sciences. The goal of ALBA is to establish a global network in order to share best practices and provide better visibility, networking and mentoring opportunities to scientists from underrepresented groups in brain research. ALBA was launched in 2019 by an international group of leading brain scientists involved in research, education, communication and advocacy. Its creation was enabled by the financial support of several international neuroscience organisations of which the Federation of European Neuroscience Societies (FENS), the International Brain Research Organisation (IBRO) and the Society for Neuroscience (SfN) are currently the main supporters.

The [Federation of European Neuroscience Societies](#) is the main organisation for neuroscience in Europe. FENS mission is to advance research and education in neuroscience within and outside Europe, to facilitate interaction and coordination between its members. It currently represents 44 European national and single discipline neuroscience societies, with 22,000 member scientists from 33 European countries.

The [International Brain Research Organisation](#) is the global association of neuroscience societies established in 1961 that aims to promote and support neuroscience around the world through training, education, research, outreach and engagement activities, and the publication of our two journals, Neuroscience and IBRO Neuroscience Reports. The [IBRO Latin America Regional Committee \(LARC\)](#) is the IBRO Regional Committee composed of elected voluntary leadership that focuses on supporting and promoting neuroscience in the Latin American region based on its specific needs and conditions.

The [Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean \(ECLAC\)](#) is one of the United Nations' five regional commissions. It was created in 1948 with the purpose of contributing to the economic and social development of Latin America and Caribbean nations, and strengthening economic ties among countries in the region and with other nations of the world.