

British Association for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition

# Gender Diversity in Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition Society Leadership teams

Author: Dan Rogers (BAPEN Honorary Secretary)

March 2024 |

## Summary

In November 2023 a paper was published in The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition titled Sex disparities in parenteral and enteral nutrition societies' leadership worldwide: a 20 year retrospective analysis. The paper included analysis of the leadership of BAPEN, but only looked at the position of President and this paper provides further analysis of the gender diversity amongst the leadership team of BAPEN, our latest conference and our BAPEN awards.

## Background

Data relating to the leadership of BAPEN was included in a paper titled “Sex disparities in parenteral and enteral nutrition societies' leadership worldwide: a 20 year retrospective analysis” published in The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition in November 2023. The original paper can be accessed here

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0002916523662410?via%3Dihub>

BAPEN launched our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy](#) in March 2021 with a policy statement that “BAPEN membership carries a commitment to treating all people equally and with respect, regardless of any protected characteristic or circumstance. Every member should be made to feel welcome, valued and included at all association meetings and events”. As part of this commitment, we encourage leadership from all areas of the association and commit to actively seek potential leaders from across the membership as well as mapping membership data against that of both the general UK population and the UK wider medical world, with particular reference to gender and ethnicity, and examine our diversity data amongst trustees, committee and council members and take positive action to diversify membership where appropriate.

BAPEN brings together the strengths of its Core Groups to optimise nutritional care



The paper obtained data from email correspondence with society members and by examining publicly available data on PEN society websites and assessed the society's founding year, the sex of the founding chair, and chairs over the past two decades and if applicable the sex of the national congress president and editor-in-chief positions for association journals. The paper correctly identified that BAPEN was founded in 1992 with a male founding chair, and that all subsequent chairs have been male. 58 PEN societies were included in the paper, and BAPEN was one of only 10 societies to have never had a female chair.

Although BAPEN officers were not formally approached to provide data on the gender of our leadership teams we should shine a light on ourselves and actively assess the diversity of our leadership teams, and this paper helpfully focussed a light on this important issue.

## Analysis

The data presented in this paper about BAPEN is correct, and as a society that states we ensure all members feel welcome, valued and included it is a concerning statistic that we have never had a female chair. We have not historically collected data on other protected characteristics but if we had I do not think we would have fared better in these.

The chair of an association is only one person within the organisation, and this paper did not dive deeper into diversity within PEN societies. BAPEN has been collecting protected characteristic data from our membership, council members and trustees since 2021 and it is our intention to publish trends in the protected characteristic data of our council over time within our Annual General Meeting as well as within the membership report presented to each council meeting. It is early days in this data collection exercise and publishing data on trends rather than a single point in time avoids the risk of identifying individual council members. I have therefore reviewed the gender of speakers and session chairs at BAPEN conference 2023, the gender of BAPEN award winners and the gender of the last 4 BAPEN Secretaries and Treasurers who together with the President make up the senior officers within BAPEN executive.

### Last 4 Senior Officers in post:

- President: Male = 4. Female = 0
- Secretary: Male = 1. Female = 3
- Treasurer: Male = 2. Female = 2

### Conference 2023 Speakers:

- Male: 28
- Female: 42

### Conference 2023 Session Chairs:

- Male 7
- Female 11

---

BAPEN brings together the strengths of its Core Groups to optimise nutritional care

## Pennington Lecture

- Gender:
  - Male: 12
  - Female: 8

## Roll of Honour Recipients

- Male: 14
- Female: 25

## J-L Jones Medal Recipients

- Male: 12
- Female: 11

When looking deeper within BAPEN we perform better on gender diversity, which is the specific focus of this review, but there is still work to do on understanding the barriers preventing women, and people with other protected characteristics, applying to be BAPEN President. Now that we collect protected characteristic data on our members, council members and trustees we can monitor trends in diversity over time which we have not been able to do previously, and this will allow us to be proactive in ensuring the diversity of the leadership team is reflective of our membership.

# Recommendations

1. BAPEN should publish trends in the diversity of BAPEN Council and Trustees mapped against protected characteristics and act to ensure this mirrors the BAPEN membership.
2. The BAPEN Members 'pulse check' survey should remain an annual survey with trends in the responses being reported to BAPEN Council in addition to a thematic analysis of the free text responses to any additional questions included.
3. BAPEN should develop and deliver its plans for a mentorship programme for members and give further consideration to a coaching programme for executive officers and future leaders.
4. BAPEN should consider associate officer posts if the associate communications officer position is successful in attracting new people into committee positions.

---

BAPEN brings together the strengths of its Core Groups to optimise nutritional care

