

Editorials

The power of community

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The Organization for Human Brain Mapping (OHBM) plays a critical role in supporting scientific development and fostering collaboration among researchers worldwide. Drawing from my own experiences, I highlight how OHBM's annual meetings, Special Interest Groups, and commitment to diversity have been instrumental in advancing my own research career and the broader field of human brain mapping. I argue that embracing diversity within our community among researchers and study populations is essential for producing generalizable, meaningful scientific advances. I propose that expanded mentorship programs, workshops, and public engagement initiatives will strengthen global connections and ensure that geography and resources do not limit participation in advancing neuroscience.

I first attended the Organization for Human Brain Mapping (OHBM) meeting in 2019 in Rome, Italy, as a graduate student. It was my first real conference experience and nothing short of amazing. I gained valuable insights into best practices for open science at the Hackathon, had the opportunity to meet some of my scientific idols at the Monday Night Social, and learned about the latest advances in human brain mapping research. Until then, my research journey had felt somewhat isolated. Discovering a community of scholars passionate about this field was incredibly motivating, and I was eager to contribute.

Over the next few years, I became involved by joining the Student and Postdoc Special Interest Group (SIG) and serving on the Program Committee. These roles taught me how to foster community engagement (especially in a virtual environment) and helped me curate scientific programs that highlighted the diversity of research and researchers in our field. The OHBM community became a critical source of support as I navigated the challenges of completing my PhD largely in isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic. I had colleagues to consult on analytical challenges, mentors to guide me through postdoctoral applications, and friends to lean on when things got tough.

As my career progressed, I looked forward to the OHBM meeting each year. It gave me a chance to present my work to hundreds of researchers through posters and symposia, as well as receive insightful feedback on new ideas, connect with mentors, develop new analytical skills, recruit trainees to my laboratory, and explore beautiful cities around the world. Over time, the meeting helped me forge collabora-

tions, and I would not be the scientist I am today without these experiences.

This year, I was fortunate to attend the OHBM Annual Meeting in Brisbane, Australia, to engage with the latest scientific advances and for personal reasons. I was able to visit my two-year-old niece, who has already developed the cutest Australian accent! At the meeting, I learned about wide-ranging findings from the global collaborative ENIGMA Consortium, gained fresh insights into how biological and environmental factors shape the brain throughout the lifespan, deepened my appreciation for cerebellar and subcortical structures, acquired effective strategies to manage academic burnout, and so much more. I was also deeply honored to receive the Diversity and Inclusivity Champion Award, which was especially meaningful at a time when these values face increasing challenges in academia.

Throughout my career, I have been passionate about advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion. At this year's meeting, it was heartening to see that despite challenges faced elsewhere, our community remains deeply committed to diversity and actively strives to create an inclusive environment for scientists worldwide. As reflected in the scientific program, the OHBM community includes researchers from around the globe using empirical and computational methods across preclinical, translational, and clinical studies to expand our understanding of the human brain. Our collective interdisciplinary expertise spans neuroscience, psychology, mathematics, linguistics, data science, computer science, engineering, psychiatry, neurology, anatomy, and

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many other fields. It is this rich diversity of backgrounds and approaches that showcases the power of our community to drive scientific innovation and foster a welcoming, vibrant community.

For far too long, science has been exclusionary. Neuroimaging studies have predominantly been conducted in WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, Democratic) countries by WEIRD researchers studying primarily WEIRD populations, often using exclusionary criteria and methods that limit the reliability, reproducibility, and generalizability of findings. The recent rise of the open science movement and increased availability of population-based neuroimaging cohorts have driven significant progress, particularly in advancing our understanding of disparities and inequities across diverse populations. Scientific innovation in human brain research has historically thrived on the contributions of individuals with diverse ideas, perspectives, and backgrounds, which enriches our understanding of the brain. Looking ahead, our field must continue to prioritize diversity among researchers and commit to studying brain function and dysfunction across varied populations, life stages, and sociocultural contexts.

The OHBM community offers an ideal platform to achieve these goals. Collaborative efforts among global, interdisciplinary researchers will be crucial. OHBM's SIGs address specific challenges: the Open Science SIG promotes transparent, reproducible research practices that directly support scientific equity and inclusion; the Student and Postdoc SIG provides mentorship opportunities and fosters global networking for trainees; the Sustainability and Environment Action SIG advocates for environmentally responsible research practices and conference sustainability; the Women Faculty SIG creates safe spaces for women to connect and promote inclusivity in science; and the Brain Art SIG unites artists and researchers to enhance public outreach and encourage creativity in our work. I look forward to seeing how our community continues to evolve in fostering diversity, equity, and inclusivity.

However, even as our world grows more connected than ever before, it also faces new divisions. OHBM could introduce several initiatives to bridge these gaps and support our community. For instance, monthly virtual "Lunch with Mentors" sessions would give trainees multiple opportunities to connect with mentors beyond the Annual Meeting. Similarly, regular virtual journal clubs and methods workshops where researchers share recent publications and specialized techniques could foster ongoing dialogue, spark collaborations, and increase access to advanced methodolo-

gies. These opportunities would ensure that geography and institutional resources do not limit researchers' ability to contribute to the field. OHBM could also develop public engagement initiatives, such as science communication workshops and community partnerships, to disseminate our findings beyond the scientific bubble and benefit diverse communities more broadly. Collectively, these initiatives would help weave a more tightly connected global network that engages both researchers and the broader public in advancing science together.

Across much of the world, the scientific community faces growing challenges and scrutiny. In this context, embracing diversity and inclusivity within our laboratories, research agendas, and broader communities is essential. The OHBM mission to "advance the understanding of... the human brain and promote its medical and societal applications" cannot be fulfilled without honoring the rich diversity of our world. Scientific advances are meaningful only when they are generalizable, and medical applications must serve all individuals, not just a select few. Ultimately, our global community must unite to confront these complex challenges together. Embracing inclusive neuroscience is a necessity, not a luxury.

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