

TALKING IMAGES VOICES FROM THE OPEN FRONTIER OF IMAGING

WOMEN IN RADIOLOGY

Gaela Bernini

Why a podcast on women in radiology? Because radiology is our world and in the field of science and technology the **unequal participation of women and men is quite evident**, for this reason we decided to address this topic in this podcast.

We hope to **provide a source of female role models but also a source of inspiration** about strategies and tools to achieve gender balance in the organization and to increase female international visibility of women in their scientific community and beyond.

Let's go into details of this episode of Talking Images, a podcast powered by Bracco Imaging, where I am pleased to welcome our guests:

- **Elisabetta Trincherò**, associate professor of practice at SDA Bocconi School of Management.
- **Nicoletta Gandolfo**, director of Imaging department and radiologist at Villa Scassi Hospital in Genoa;
- **Regina Beets-Tan**, radiology professor and chair at the Department of Radiology at the Netherlands and President of the European Society of Radiology;
- **Anna Simeone**, medical doctor and consultant radiologist;
- **Michaela Cellina**, Head of MRI at Fate Bene Fratelli Hospital in Milan;

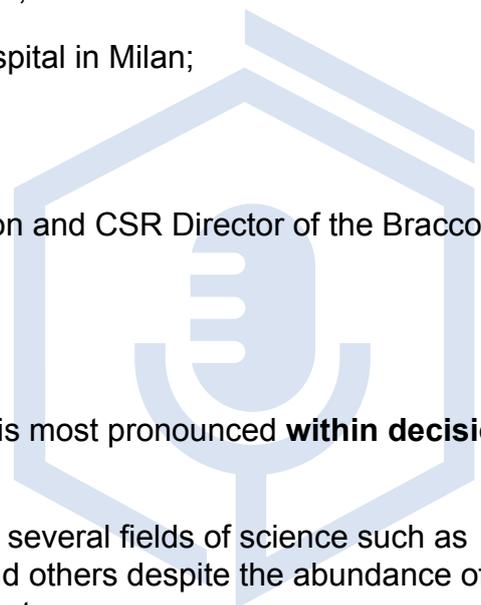
Gaela Bernini

I'm **Gaela Bernini**, Secretary General of Bracco Foundation and CSR Director of the Bracco Group.

Gaela Bernini

The **lack of balance** in gender representation in **Science** is most pronounced **within decision making ranks**.

However, women remain under-represented in all levels in several fields of science such as physical sciences, mathematics, statistics, engineering, and others despite the abundance of job opportunities, some of which unfortunately remain unmet.



We start talking about STEM and women at the beginning of 2000, within the National Science Foundation. The starting idea was to stimulate the study of scientific subjects, necessary for the prosperity of one's nation.

Today the issue of STEM is often correlated with the issue of gender gap.

Let's listen to Elisabetta Trincheri, professor at Bocconi University, what's the general outlook.

Elisabetta Trincheri

Regarding the graduation rate in Italy, the 2022 Report of AlmaLaurea Inter-University Consortium indicates that women show higher levels of education than men: **women graduates are proportionally more than men.**

If we talk about the STEM path, the gender gap has increased over the last 10 years and the portion of university graduates, between 2010 and 2020, is growing for both men and women, showing an increase in the gender gap (from +8.7 points in favour of women in 2010 to +12.1 points in 2020).

Gaela Bernini

Slightly more women than men obtain a degree from universities in the EU and even more women than men obtain an equivalent of an M.Sc. degree (a post graduate level of education), but when we go to the level of **academic positions such as full professor once**, we witnessed an **under-representation of women.**

This is the well-known "leaky pipeline", when we lose talents on the way to the top.

Why so? Are there socio-cultural barriers?

Elisabetta Trincheri

Data shows that the fact that you came from a family where one or both of your parents have a degree increase the probability that you decide to go to university. **So, the cultural environment and the social one impact on the probability that you decide to start a certain course of studies.** But among women in general and women in the STEM in particular the logic seems to be different: it seems that women more than men tend to find in themselves, rather than in the environment in which they grow up, the strength and determination to pursue their path towards a degree.

Gaela Bernini

Therefore, is there a path dependency? It seems so, because there's a family influence but also social cultural environment one but I wish to underline that there is also **self-confidence** and the vision that oneself has.



Let's see it from another angle, in Italy the healthcare belongs mainly to the public sector.

Are there differences between the public and the private in terms of gender balance?

Elisabetta Trincherò

The public administration in Italy shows a pattern similar at what is happening in Europe: it seems to be more desirable for women because it's guaranteed a fairer and less gender biases recruitment process and pay gap. In fact, **we have a prevalence of staff within public administration that is female.**

For example, among Italian municipalities, 55% of the staff are women, but if we look at the job hierarchy, only 1 out of 3 of the managers are women, and there isn't almost any female top manager. So, while we have a plurality of women among the staff, **only few of them are able to achieve the top level of organisation.**

Furthermore, among professional, we can see a strong gender gap. Only 1 out of 10 women are doctor, or only 1 out of 3 professors at the university level are women.

Elisabetta Trincherò

We are trying to push public officer and public organisation in general to take responsibility of people's career, of the career of women. For example, we have to deeply understand why in the healthcare sector, we have almost 70% of women at the entry level, and only 1 out of 3 among general directors.

Gaela Bernini

The medical profession was born as a male profession, women had, therefore, to regain the lost ground. Consider that women could not enroll in certain universities at the beginning of the 20th century. Of course, there is also the problem of lack of social infrastructure and the abundance of care work on women's shoulders.

However, associations in the healthcare sector, all over the world, are playing an important role since they started to create consciousness and awareness about women leadership and to elaborate strategies for equal opportunities in the workplace. We talked about this with Nicoletta Gandolfo.

Nicoletta Gandolfo

The **Women Radiologist Commission**, proposed by SIRM President, Dr. Vittorio Miele was established with the aim of **investigating the problems of women in the exercise of their profession and proposing initiatives aimed at improving the insertion and career**



progression of Women Radiologists and their involvement in corporate life.

Subsequently it has promoted and continues to promote information and corporate involvement to Radiologist Women, activating specific economic-managerial and organizational training courses aimed at the conscious and equal management of a profound socio-epidemiological-organizational mutation underway and the changes that will follow in the coming years.

Nicoletta Gandolfo

Personally, I have worked on two fronts: my work (and therefore mainly the people who are part of the Department team I manage) and the scientific society to which I have belonged for many years, the Italian Society of Medical and Interventional Radiology, SIRM. The Diagnostic Imaging Department that I manage is mainly made up of young women, highly motivated to work and grow professionally, but at the same time eager for motherhood. In this context, I have always tried to concretely and personally show an absolute and possible **reconciliation between work, career and private life**, encouraging them to **never give up their work and career aspirations, without neglecting their family life and their loved ones**. Together with other colleagues, we have always tried to modulate the activity and hours of the work shifts according to their needs.

As part of the SIRM, I contributed to promoting a corporate policy of greater involvement and active participation of Radiologist Women, who represent over 50% of Members but fill less than 20% of the corporate institutional offices.

Gaela Bernini

The percentage of women in radiology is increasing in the younger age groups. Among SIRM, the Italian society of Radiology women represent 17% of the radiologist over 65-year-old, while in the age group 35-44 years old they are 58%. Let's talk about this situation with Regina Beets-Tan.

Regina Beets-Tan

Compared to others medical profession, radiology is lag behind in the scientific history because we are quite young specialisation.

Nevertheless, we have a lot of **females in our specialities**, I think even more or maybe it's **now going into the right balance comparative**.

I want to explain: we are in the border of directors of very much looking and council, looking to a gender balance which I think we have already achieved very well. The very high-top level now even consisting of 2 out of 5 male and 2 out of 5 board members are female.

We have sessions at the **European Congress of Radiology addressing these issues**, which is so also very important but all for all I must say the faculty, the speakers, the attendances that

if you look at the balance among at the genders, gender is no problem at all, because they are there, they are as many males as females in the speaks, in the faculty, in the comities, in the people who will attending ECR, and also in the ECR members.

We keep of course monitoring the statistics and looking at this really being very careful, if we employ people we keep this balance right.

Elisabetta Trincherò

Covid-19 showed the high level of unpaid work performed by women within our society, in fact, **the highest unemployment rate concerns mainly women**. As long as our society does not try to cross this gender border, it will be difficult for women to have the same opportunities, to reach the top within society.

Data shows that unpaid work consumes women more than men, in fact during the pandemic 76% was performed by women. This is a global figure that shows how women are expected to have this responsibility. Therefore, until our society decides to share this between the genders, it will be very difficult for women to have the same opportunities to excel within society.

Gaela Bernini

As already said the issue of unpaid work is a relevant one and it deals with culture. But I also wish to recall the fact, that **radiology is a fairly young specialisation compared to other ones**.

Let's listen to Anna Simeone:

Anna Simeone

Being a woman in a professional world that 36 years ago was mostly made up of men, especially in a large religious hospital in southern Italy, certainly required a great commitment. I have always loved my job and I still do but winning the respect of my colleagues was not easy.

When I started working, my diagnoses were received with diffidence and often the male colleagues asked for a second opinion to the other male ones. Slowly things changed, and my skills were recognised: even that primary started to call me doctor and over time I became his radiologist of reference.

I started to build my career and get important positions until I became Director of Radiology.

Being a woman, aspiring to have a role and not just working for a salary, involved sacrifices and obligations that were certainly greater than those required of a man.

Gaela Bernini

But organisational arrangements are different over time and space. In fact, Regina Beets-Tan affirms:



Regina Beets-Tan

If I can speak from my own experience, I think it's very easy to blame the male culture only, because I must say, I did not have that problem because I thought if I work hard, I show ambition, I can be leader, I have efficient to take seat in a very high ranking and have a high profile and influence position, no matter whether you're man or women, you will get there.

And while advancing in my career, I did not feel that discrimination from my male colleagues, for example in the European Society of Radiology, not at all.

It has more to do with if you are in that talk, you do not see a lot of women racing ahead and say I want to be there as well, than it is the chance to see a man is of course higher than the chance you will see a woman. I think it has also something to do with that.

But I think so many many factors, not only one, so not only 'Ok the male' not only 'Ok the female', but **it's also about whether you want yourself, as individual, and want to take so many offers, to give so many offers to take that position.**

Gaela Bernini

It is surely a complex topic with not a single explanation.

Michaela Cellina offers another vision based on her experience and on being a mentor and a role model.

Michaela Cellina

I work hard to become what I am now to become an author of scientific articles and report, I studied a lot, but I also struggled for my current role and, honestly, I want to reach apical position during my career, therefore I'm still working hard, not only to reach our job goals but also to inspire to follow our example.

As a tutor of the Postgraduate School in Radiodiagnostic of the University of Milan, I always try to involve female in research activities and help them find their way into the professional and university environment. I try to be a point of reference on a professional but also on a personal level, and what I think is that **every woman must be a guide for the young women.**

Gaela Bernini

We listened to the witnesses and thoughts of women who, with different strategies, faced and overcame a barrier that prevented them to achieve their goals.

The solutions to **tackle this phenomenon** that still characterises the career path of young women around the world are: a **collective effort**, aimed at a **greater inclusion** of women within businesses; **the creation of an inclusive society that sets aside gender stereotypes; and supporting women in business, in leadership and in ownership.**

Michaela Cellina

Are times changing? I hope but I think is that my generation is leading the way for the new generation but there is still a lot of work to be done in medicine in particular. According to the 2021 Global Gender Gap Report, another generation of women will have to wait for gender parity.

Gaela Bernini

Yes, probably.

But it is important that we are all well aware that social norms should promote inclusion and equality so the care work of women within family **should be equally divided between men and women and that women can cover leadership position effectively as men.**

Anna Simeone

The new generations are more determinate than us also because they can build on our experience.

Gaela Bernini

Bracco, as an Italian group, is committed. In our Sustainability Report the company states: **"We are convinced of the importance of having more and more women in leadership positions."**

This is an important statement that Bracco makes to its people, its employees with the aim to create a discrimination-free work environment, and to promote the fight against gender stereotypes.

This is a concrete example that shows how more and more businesses are moving towards a better and more inclusive future, that focuses on equal opportunities and work-life balance.

Moreover, Bracco Foundation has been active since the beginning in spreading the expression of culture, art and science on this topic.

For instance, Bracco Foundation created a manifesto called **"Mind the Stem Gap"**. It is a commitment and a shared responsibility. It aims **to promote a more inclusive education at home and at school overcoming prejudices and biases.**

It is composed by a set of principles which shed light on language, cultural stereotypes, behavioural models, and cognitive development and the access to education and knowledge that we offer our children. In so doing, Bracco Foundation actively addresses gender biases and stereotypes which limit the engagement of girls and women in STEM education.

My invitation is to share this manifesto and sign it online.



Gaela Bernini

Thank you for joining us!

And thanks to Elisabetta Trincherò, Nicoletta Gandolfo, Regina Beets-Tan, Anna Simeone, Michaela Cellina.

This was Talking Images, a podcasts series by Bracco Imaging. From Gaela Bernini, that's all.

