

women with advanced pregnancies from travelling on long-haul routes (see go.nature.com/2fxptyv). And she called her university, her health-insurance company and each airline that she would be flying with to find out whether she would need a physician's approval to fly home at the end of the trip.

Those who have been pregnant while doing fieldwork recommend researching vetted medical providers and learning about the safety profile of medications that might be necessary in the field. Friends, colleagues and others can answer questions and provide emotional support. Before a two-month trip to Kenya during her pregnancy, Briana Pobiner, an archaeologist at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC, got in touch with colleagues and others who she knew had done similar travel. She also contacted the East African chapter of her undergraduate institution's alumni association to learn about the challenges they faced and how they managed them. Those conversations helped her to locate a hospital close to the field site, as well as an obstetrician in nearby Nairobi whom she could see for check-ups.

Such advice from a wider community can be a great help, agrees Suzanne Pilaar Birch, an archaeologist at the University of Georgia in Athens. Soon after she became pregnant in 2016, she was invited to Cyprus to join a field project a few months later. It was an opportunity she would normally have jumped on, but she would have been six months pregnant by then and was unsure whether to go. What if she committed to the trip but suddenly faced complications? And would she have to tell the team that invited her before she agreed?

To seek advice, she started a conversation on Twitter through TrowelBlazers, a network of female archaeologists and Earth scientists that she had helped to create several years earlier, under the hashtag #pregnantinthefield. The torrent of responses from scientists in many disciplines included some tales of pregnancy complications that had kept researchers home. But many more of the anecdotes were positive, and women posted photographs of themselves doing such tasks as measuring iguanas or excavating fossils in countries as varied as Belize, Oman, Croatia and Chile. Ultimately, Birch accepted the invitation to Cyprus, told her hosts about the pregnancy in the initial phone call and went on a smooth trip. She was happy to get in one last drive for data before the baby came.

Seeing other pregnant women in the field can be a major confidence boost, Binning

adds. When she started her career as a marine ecologist, she took a two-week course in Barbados, and one of the three instructors was pregnant at the time. "I had an image of a pregnant woman doing field work, and it didn't seem to present any significant problems for her," she says. "I always had that in my head. When I got pregnant, I never saw it as a barrier. It is so important that other women get these anecdotes and stories and see that it's possible."

And a visible pregnancy can create opportunities to connect with people from another culture. As a female leader of a research team, Dickman says, she had always been treated as an outsider by the women living in native communities near her Tanzanian field site. But when local women on her field staff saw that she was pregnant, they began to quietly bring her extra boiled eggs and more hot water to shower with.

Some researchers find that their attitude to risk changes as a result of being pregnant. While driving through a game reserve in Kenya one night during her pregnancy, Pobiner and a colleague almost hit an elephant on a dirt road. The near miss jolted her into realizing that she could never again afford to be as casual as she once was about health and safety in the field. "I thought, 'Wow, this was scary — it's not just me I have to worry about any more,'" she says.

STAND UP FOR YOURSELF

Pregnancy can be a learning experience that extends beyond the actual physical condition, Cobb says. She was three months pregnant in November 2006 when she travelled from the United States to the Bahamas to consult on a coral-reef filming project. On her physician's advice, she avoided scuba diving with the team. But she boarded the boat every morning to offer advice and support.

On the second day, choppy seas slammed the boat up and down, and Cobb worried that the impact might be harming the fetus. Although she asked the boat captain to slow down, the ride continued to be rough, and she was uneasy that night and beyond.

Cobb's son was born healthy and at full term the following spring. But the experience taught her the value of standing up for herself and of discussing concerns with team members before setting out on an expedition. She now talks to her field teams about speaking up and looking out for each other before they charge ahead on a precious field day. "I explicitly say, 'The field rule is that we are all in this together and there are natural risks to a field expedition, so let's go through them one by one. You need to say, 'I feel uncomfortable' or 'I feel unsafe,'" she says. "You need to be your own advocate." ■

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GENDER DIFFERENCES

Language matters

Two studies highlight yet another set of differences between female and male researchers. One suggests that messages that link career success to 'brilliance' in science can discourage some women from pursuing certain career paths or education opportunities. The other finds that women are more likely than men to offer 'honorary authorships' to scientists who might not deserve the accolade — a courtesy that risks obscuring the magnitude of their own contributions.

In the first study (L. Bian *et al.* *J. Exp. Soc. Psychol.* <http://dx.doi.org/doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2017.11.006>; 2018), researchers surveyed nearly 200 undergraduates about their interest in hypothetical internships and in studying certain university subjects. Consistently, women were less keen about the possibilities when the descriptions emphasized the importance of brilliance by asking, for example, for an "intellectual firecracker" with a "sharp, penetrating mind". But when descriptions of the same options used language such as "great focus and determination" — highlighting the importance of hard work and dedication — women's interest grew significantly. Conversely, men were generally more interested when descriptions emphasized intelligence over effort.

The gender difference could have real consequences for students and researchers, says lead author Lin Bian, a psychologist at Stanford University in California. "Women are not motivated to pursue fields or jobs that are perceived as requiring intellectual talent or brilliance," she says; rather, she thinks that women are more likely to gravitate towards a field when scientists emphasize other keys to success in it, including hard work. "It's important to de-emphasize the role of brilliance in achieving success."

In a second study (E. A. Fong and A. W. Wilhite *PLoS ONE* **12**, e0187394; 2017), researchers at the University of Alabama in Huntsville looked at survey responses from more than 12,000 US scholars from a wide range of disciplines. Overall, 35.5% of respondents reported giving at least one 'honorary authorship' to a researcher who contributed little to the paper. Women were 38% more likely than men to have felt obliged to give honorary authorships. "Female researchers", the authors conclude, "may be less able to resist pressure to add honorary authors because women are underrepresented in faculty leadership and administrative positions in academia and lack political power." ■