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Why Don't Women Patent?

by Jennifer Hunt, Jean-Philippe Garant, Hannah Herman, David J. Munroe
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Abstract:

We investigate women's underrepresentation among holders of commercialized patents: only 5.5% of holders of such patents are female. Using the National Survey of College Graduates 2003, we find only 7% of the gap in patenting rates is accounted for by women's lower probability of holding any science or engineering degree, because women with such a degree are scarcely more likely to patent than women without. Differences among those without a science or engineering degree account for 15%, while 78% is accounted for by differences among those with a science or engineering degree. For the latter group, we find that women's underrepresentation in engineering and in jobs involving development and design explain much of the gap.

Text: See [Discussion Paper No. 6886](#)



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