

E-MAIL CONTRIBUTIONS**Husbands of women scientists must be equal partners**

I married a fellow scientist, more senior than myself. Before the birth of our two children, our work was all-encompassing. We never used up our vacation time and we rarely went out to movies. I usually worked until 7 or 8 p.m. weekdays and on Saturdays. I didn't learn to be efficient with my time, because I didn't need to. I believed then, as I still do, that being a scientist is not an "8 to 5" job. I savoured those informal "hallway discussions". But when you have kids that need you, you must learn to chat less and get the job done within those hours. That often means picking and choosing the experiments you do from the many you would do if you had all the leisurely time in the lab you had before kids. It also means that the sometimes productive hallway chats now become time-wasters.

When the children were infants, I remember estimating the division of kid-related labour - not counting feeding - at 60:40 between myself and my husband. And guess who had the 60?

It was supposed to get easier as they grew up and became self-sufficient. As our careers developed, my husband accepted a position with administrative duties, in addition to maintaining his research lab and funding I hold an academic faculty position. I have funding, and it seems like all is on track. In reality, I face losing funding if I don't get my work published this year.

Need I tell you that the division of child-related labour has tipped to roughly 95:5? With the inflexible meeting-laden administrative duties assumed by my husband, my research and teaching activities have been assumed to be "flexible". That means I handle most home and children matters. Husbands of women scientists must be equal partners in this arena if their wives are to be successful.

This may come off as venting or complaining, and I guess it is. I know of several other women with similar stories. Interestingly, their spouses are also scientists. Usually, an ultimatum was necessary to get the spouse to do more at home. In some cases, I have seen women drop out of academia for this reason. Some are still here. My own future in science will be determined with my success in the next grant cycle.

Name and address withheld

