



Dorthe Dahl-Jensen and her team in Greenland hit the snow for some volleyball in their down time.

KENJI KAWAMURA/NEEM

she says, it's imperative to halt the decline before it infects the whole team. She watches for team members who isolate themselves or manifest other antisocial behaviour, and for members who don't get out of bed and lack enthusiasm for the work. When she sees someone in trouble, she finds the most well-liked researcher in camp and asks that person to work as a buddy with the unhappy camper.

When disaster strikes (and it will), team leaders' moods are mirrored by the entire crew. Wooller recommends channelling optimism and a sense of adventure. "If whoever is in charge looks like they are unhappy, stressed out or worried, everyone else gets that way, too," says Druckenmiller. "Keep your calm and do your best to put a good face on bad situations." That advice is also helpful for team members who become physically ill, often because of altitude or heat. They need to know, says Forster, that they can spend a day or two recovering in their tent. "Don't kill yourself, that's the first rule," she says. "And don't kill anyone else."

Still, even the most carefully planned expeditions can derail. For the trip to St Paul Island, Belmecheri and Wooller led a team that checked field equipment as luggage — but it got bumped from the flight and was delayed by three days because of an airline backlog. While waiting, the team leaders encouraged everyone to tour the island, meet with locals, brainstorm hypotheses and revise schedules. It wasn't all for naught — when they shared their work with locals, some islanders brought them more mammoth teeth and tusks to study.

Wooller recalls a field trip to drill a core at the Wolfe Creek meteorite crater in Australia, during which a political skirmish suspended their permission to drill. While some team

members left to try to renegotiate permission, Wooller and the rest of the team dreamt up ways to do other science. "The cool thing about being an isotope biogeochemist is that the world is made of isotopes," he says. So they surveyed the chemistry in the crater's plants and soils, which salvaged the trip — they never did get permission to core — and earned them a publication later.

Yet, sometimes, there's no way but out. When conditions compromise the research or team safety, team leaders ultimately have to decide to abandon ship. Belmecheri recounts trying to core lake sediments in the Republic of Georgia with high winds lashing the boat. "We had to call it quits — it was too dangerous," she says. "No research is worth making stupid decisions."

Druckenmiller also says that safety is his foremost concern. Field sites can be days away from a hospital, and they often include hazards such as grizzly or polar bears, heavy equipment, aircraft and watercraft, landslides and severe weather. To forestall avoidable disasters, he keeps close tabs on team members' level of alertness. "Don't let your team get distracted by physical discomforts or lack of sleep — it becomes too easy to forget your helmet or bear spray."

Ultimately, team happiness in the field correlates with research success. For each crew that comes to work on the Greenland ice sheet, Dahl-Jensen says, it takes about a week for team members to gel and focus on their task. "How important it is then that the morale is good," she says. "Happy, motivated people work better and produce better results." ■

Kendall Powell is a freelance writer in Lafayette, Colorado.

BIAS

Equality in research

Gender bias in science lives on, says a publication from an association of European research funders, institutions and universities that aims to improve gender equality in research. Science Europe, which represents more than 40 member organizations in 27 nations and was founded in 2011 in Brussels, has released its *Practical Guide to Improving Gender Equality in Research Organisations*. It discusses avoiding unconscious bias in peer review, monitoring progress towards gender equality and improving grant-management practices. Organizations should define and carry out measurable objectives for improving gender equality and publish data on their results, the report says. It notes that some member groups have made progress: the Irish Research Council uses gender-blinded assessments in its early-career researcher programmes, for example, and the German Research Foundation (DFG) allows female and male grant holders to reduce their working hours by up to 50% for family reasons. The publication encourages Science Europe members to learn from other members' efforts to tackle bias and boost equality.

SALARIES

Gender pay disparity

Female representation is climbing in academia's highest administrative ranks in the United States — but women in those jobs earn less than men do in the same positions, finds a report by the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources in Knoxville, Tennessee. *The Gender Pay Gap and the Representation of Women in Higher Education Administrative Positions* says that, by 2016, about half of university administration positions combined — such as department head or dean — were held by women. But pay equity has not kept up. In 2001, women in such positions earned about US\$0.77 for every \$1 earned by men in those jobs, a gap of \$0.23. That narrowed to about \$0.20 in 2016, the report finds, which translates into a difference of about \$20,000 in annual pay. It says that the discrepancy could be due to the smaller number of women in academia's highest administrative ranks, which also pay the most. Although women hold more than half of all department-head positions (54%), less than 30% of top university executives are female. The pay gap narrows with increasing seniority but widens again after 17 years of service.