

SCIENCE

Comparisons Across Cultures

WOMEN IN SCIENCE '94

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A Special Report

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The special challenges that have traditionally confronted women scientists in America constitute a burning issue with many, if not most, of *Science's* female readers. But how do women scientists in other countries feel? Having for 2 years in a row focused primarily on the United States, *Science's* staff set out to look at conditions elsewhere in the world and encountered some surprises. First, there isn't much of a literature comparing women in science across cultures. So *Science* reporter Marcia Barinaga assembled what studies did exist and then sought out female researchers who had lived in more than one culture, hoping to mine their experiences for telling anecdotes. This process yielded the second surprise: Her interviews suggested that compared to women scientists working in the United States, Great Britain, Germany, and Japan, female researchers in such nations as Italy, Portugal, Turkey, and the Philippines may be finding their lot an easier one. To look into this further, *Science's* news department dispatched reporters to develop sketches of the situation as perceived by women scientists in a range of nations, including India and Sweden as well as some of those mentioned above. And *Science* manuscript editor Brooks Hansen invited prominent female researchers—Mary Osborn as well as Mildred Dresselhaus and her colleagues—to offer their observations to our readers in Policy Forums. In spite of these efforts, *Science* can't pretend that this issue of Women in Science—Comparisons Across Cultures—speaks the final word on the subject. On the contrary, it's just a beginning. But it's a beginning we hope you will enjoy.

—John Benditt, Features Editor