

Viewpoint: Biologist Jerry Coyne challenges view that sex is ‘a spectrum?, not a binary’?—such claims ‘undermine public trust in science’

As a biologist, I get especially irked at the repeated claim that sex in humans is “a spectrum, not a [binary](#).” In fact, as I’ve discussed several times before (e.g., [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)), sex might as well be a binary, because the overwhelming majority of people conform to the definitions of either male or female....

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There’s a reason why sex is a binary: evolution produces two distinct sexes who mate with each other to produce offspring. ... *Gender*, on the other hand, is less bimodal, for it’s based on people’s claims of what they are, and there are lots of different socio-sexual roles that people can claim. Still, gender is also bimodal, though less binary, for the vast majority of people still claim identities of “male” and “female”.



[Editor’s note: Biologist Jerry Coyne is an American biologist and evolutionary theorist known for his rejection of creationism and intelligent design theory and his view that human nature is largely determined by genetics. He is the author of the text *Speciation* and the bestselling book *Why Evolution Is True*.]

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The shameful part of all this is that the scientific journal [Nature](#), as well as [three evolutionary biology/ecology societies](#), who should know better, made statements or editorials that neither sex nor gender are binary.

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The time for politeness on this issue has passed. Biologists and medical professionals need to stand up

for the empirical reality of biological sex. When authoritative scientific institutions ignore or deny empirical fact in the name of social accommodation, it is an egregious betrayal to the scientific community they represent. It undermines public trust in science, and it is dangerously harmful to those most vulnerable.

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