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AI in science: the need to increase research productivity

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In recent years a number of scholars –mainly economists -have argued that the productivity of science may be stagnating, or even in decline. The claim is not that science is failing to advance, but rather that outputs require ever more inputs (to the extent that scientific output occurs in any discrete way). If true, the consequences of any slowdown in the productivity of science could be major. Among other things, governments, already under acute budgetary pressures, might have to spend ever more to achieve existing rates of growth of useful science. For investments in science equivalent to today's, ever fewer increments of new knowledge will be available with which, over time, to spur currently stagnating economic productivity growth, an increase in which will become more critical as OECD populations age. In addition, timeframes might lengthen for achieving scientific progress needed to address urgent challenges, from new contagions, to novel crop diseases and sources of environmental stress. In this connection, the question arises as to whether AI could help accelerate progress in science, for which reason the OECD has launched a project on this topic. Mr.Nolan, an economist specialised on science and technology policy, will present the relevant evidence, consider how AI is being used across science, and outline the possible implications for policy.
A forthcoming OECD book draws on a week-long workshop - AI and the Productivity of Science (29 October - 5 November 2021). A video of the workshop is viewable by day, session and individual presentation (kindly find the link here : https://www.oecd.org/sti/inno/ai-productivity-of-science.htm).

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