News Notes

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Some of these items are taken from the EASE Journal Blog (http://esebookshelf.blogspot.com) where full URLs may be found

Your paper, your way
A project pioneered by one Elsevier journal over the last year is now being rolled out to 40 other journals. The Your Paper, Your Way scheme has enabled authors to submit papers without strict formatting or referencing requirements. It was the idea of Sir Kelvin Davies, Editor-in-Chief of *Free Radical Biology & Medicine*, who noted that "*although standard formats do make it just that little bit easier for editors and reviewers to see everything in the correct style, the reality is that the advantage is very small, and we should really be focusing on the quality of science and not the format.*" Elsevier has committed to converting any reference style to the relevant journal style, provided sufficient information is provided.

Reducing irreproducibility
In May, all Nature Publishing Group journals introduced new editorial measures to address concerns about reproducibility of published research. The journals will now introduce a reporting checklist that will ensure all papers include sufficient methodological detail to enable scrutiny by reviewers and reproducibility by researchers. The journals will also give more space to methods and will encourage publication of raw data. The checklist is available on the *Nature* website (go.nature.com/oloeip).

ALM Reports
PLOS has been a strong advocate for article-level metrics (ALMs), with detailed metrics reports available for all articles in PLOS journals. In June, PLOS announced the launch of ALM Reports, which allow you to view and download ALMs for any set of articles published in PLOS journals and "summarize and visualize the data using charts that reveal patterns and trends for further discussion." Anyone can visit the ALM Reports website (almreports.plos.org) and search for groups of articles using various criteria (author, keyword, institution, journal, etc), then create a report for the articles you select. You can find out more about PLOS ALMs at article-level-metrics.plos.org.

OA interviews
Long-timer observer and commentator on open access (OA), Richard Poynder, has carried out a series of four interviews exploring the current state of OA. The interviews, which can be found on Poynder's blog, *Open and Shut?* (poynder.blogspot.co.uk), offer valuable insights into the development of OA and the diverse views on its definition and implementation.

Publishing pilot studies
A group of statisticians, methodologists and clinical researchers has developed a checklist of reporting standards for pilot and other small-scale studies. The checklist is based on the CONSORT statement on reporting clinical trials and was reported in *Nature Medicine* (2013;19:795).

Declaration of Helsinki changes
The Declaration of Helsinki on ethical principles for clinical research was first developed in 1964 and has been amended of the years by the World Medical Association. The latest proposed amendments have proved controversial and will need to be considered by those journals that require submitted human research to abide by the Declaration.

Interestingly...
Neil Saunders, a statistical bioinformatician at CSIRO Computational Informatics has analysed the usage and occurrence of adverbs in scientific articles. The study, published on Saunders' blog (nsaunders.wordpress.com; 16 July 2013), was intended to be light-hearted but he suggests: "Next time you're writing that article though, ask yourself: is that sentence enhanced by the sentence adverb? Or are you simply following convention?" The top 5 were finally, additionally, interestingly, importantly, and recently. An analysis of which adverbs featured in which journals demonstrated that if your work is 'remarkable' it would be best suited for Nature, whereas *PLOS Biology* is the place for 'surprising' work.

Kudos
Kudos (growkudos.com) is a new start-up company set up by a group of established publishing consultants. In its initial pilot phase, partnering with Taylor Francis Group and the Royal Society of Chemistry, is designed to test out "ideas that may help researchers and their institutions increase the readership and impact of their published articles". The aim is to provide authors with the tools to ensure that a published article reaches a broad readership and gains more impact.

DOAJ new selection criteria
The Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ; www.doaj.org) has announced new selection criteria for inclusion of journals. The draft criteria were published on 12 June, with public comment sought up until 15 July. The new criteria require journals to be registered with SHERPA/ROMEO, the database of publishers' copyright and self-archiving policies (www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo). They also require journals to have a clearly identifiable editorial board, to have a minimum of five articles per year, and to allow specific types of use and reuse.

OA statements from funders and ministers
The Global Research Council (www.globalresearchcouncil.org), a virtual collaboration between heads of science

and engineering funding agencies, has issued an "Action plan towards open access to publications". The document, endorsed at the Council's annual meeting in Berlin, sets out a broad agreement to encourage and support open access, while leaving the details for individual agencies to decide on how to implement policies. A month later the science ministers from the G8 nations met in Northern Ireland during the G8 summit and issued a statement on the need for publically funded research to become open data that is discoverable, accessible, and assessable.

CHORUS and SHARE

In response to the US White House directive on access to publicly funded research, the Association of American Publishers (AAP) has unveiled CHORUS, an initiative to enable publishers to comply with the legislation. CHORUS (which stands for Clearing House for the Open Research of the United Status) uses CrossRef's FundRef system to identify centrally-funded research and populate a registry of published work that would be made available via publisher's websites. Meanwhile, the Association of Research Libraries (www.arl.org), in conjunction with other organisations, has put forward a parallel proposal called SHARE (SHared Access Research Ecosystem) that uses a metadata framework to link academic repositories in a "federated, consensus-based system." The announcement of CHORUS and SHARE prompted much debate.

The Paper Rejection Repository

When a journal rejects a paper, the disappointed author may receive comments from the peer reviewer(s) that shed light on the perceived deficiencies of the submitted work. If a paper is rejected by multiple journals, the authors may receive a range of comments and letters that can provide an interesting commentary on the paper as well as being a useful source of advice for prospective authors. The Paper Rejection Repository (emlab.rose2.brandeis.edu/rejections), created by a group at Brandeis University in Waltham, MA, USA, was built to house these rejection letters and reviewer comments. In a recent post on the *F1000 Research* blog (blog.f1000research.com; 6 June 1013), the repository's owner explains how the project came about following lunchtime discussions about rejections and a desire for more transparency and accountability in the peer review process.

EQUATOR Annual Lecture

The 5th EQUATOR Annual Lecture will be given by Professor Kay Dickersin, Director of the Center for Clinical Trials, and of the US Cochrane Center. The free lecture will take place on 9 September to coincide with the International Congress on Peer Review and Biomedical Publication (www.peerreviewcongress.org), in Chicago. The EQUATOR Network (www.equator-network.org) is an international group that promotes transparent and accurate reporting of research studies.

The rise of retractions

Recent research into the incidence of retractions in the scientific literature has shown a sharp rise in recent years. This has been accompanied by increased scrutiny on retractions, and the roles of authors, journals, institutions, and scientific integrity organisations in dealing with them. It would be useful to know whether this increase in retractions been caused by a higher rate of publication of flawed articles or a higher rate of retraction of flawed articles. The latest paper by retraction researcher Grant Steen, published in *PLOS One* (2013;8:e68397), finds that the answer might be 'both', caused by lower barriers to publication of flawed articles and to lower barriers to retraction.

Negative results

The lack of publication of negative results has been blamed variously on academics, editors and industry. Several journals have taking steps to encourage submissions of negative findings, and the journal *F1000 Research* recently accompanied its call for more papers with negative findings with a promise to waive the article-processing charge for any such submissions until the end of August 2013. The announcement was accompanied by a blog post (blog.f1000research.com; 24 May 2013) asking for input from the research community on the difficulty question of how to assess the quality of negative-findings papers. A concurrent article on the *Communication Breakdown* blog (www.scilogs.com/communication_breakdown; 28 May 2013) explores the topic in even more depth.

Peer review views

Is peer review fair, scientific, and transparent? A survey of biomedical academics found that just under half agreed that peer review was fair or scientific and about a quarter agreed it was transparent. The survey, published recently in *BMC Medical Research Methodology* (2013;13:74) gathered 1340 responses from high-ranking universities. Respondents also expressed support for anonymity of authors (58%) or reviewers (64%), and the establishment of an appeal system (68%). Elsevier wanted to find a way to reward peer reviewers, and in June announced the creation of a Certificate of Excellence in Reviewing, which journals award to their top peer-reviewers. Elsevier hopes to roll it out to all journals in 2013.

Portable peer review

Authors whose papers are rejected by the journal *eLife* after peer review will now be offered the opportunity to use the same referee reports if they submit their papers to one of BioMed Central's specialty journals. The 'post-review transfer' agreement with *eLife* (elife.elifescience.org), the journal launched last year by major research funders, aims to speed up and reduce wasted effort in the peer-review process. You can read more on the BMC Series Blog (blogs.biomedcentral.com/bmcseriesblog; 11 June 2013).

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