

The editor's bookshelf

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EDITORIAL PROCESS

Arns M. **Open access is tiring out peer reviewers.** *Nature* 2014;515:467
As numbers of published articles rise, the scholarly review system must adapt to avoid unmanageable burdens and slipping standards. The result of the increased pressure on peer-reviewers is that papers are assigned to reviewers who are not experts in the area. The author suggests a two-tier system, in which some papers are not reviewed before publication at all and are instead subject to a post publication peer-review. This would free up peer reviewers to focus on papers with more direct societal impact, where the question of whether to publish at all is more relevant.

Ferguson C, Marcus A, Oransky I. **Publishing: the peer-review scam.** *Nature* 2014;515:480-482
A handful of authors caught reviewing their own papers exposed weaknesses in modern publishing systems. As the systems are made more technical and automated, there are more ways to game it. Some observers argue for changes to the way that editors assign papers to reviewers, particularly to end the use of reviewers suggested by a manuscript's authors. Journal editors are trying to plug the holes.

Stemmler L, Collier K. **RUBRIQ: tools, services, and software to improve peer review.** *Learned Publishing* 2013;26(4):265-268
The Rubriq peer review service is an author-pays model that facilitates a fast, independent, and standardized double-blinded peer review from three expert academic reviewers, who are paid for their efforts. This service

should improve journal selection, supplement editorial reviews, and make peer review more portable between journals. The reviews are returned to the author in 1-2 weeks. Manuscripts are classified and screened for plagiarism using iThenticate and, after review, they are matched to the most appropriate journals. The authors tested the usefulness of the Rubriq review with editors, working with six publishers. doi:10.1087/20130406

ETHICAL ISSUES

Bartholomew RE. **Science for sale: the rise of predatory journals.** *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 2014;107(10):384-385
Some unscrupulous publishers are exploiting the open-access model by corrupting the peer-review process, which is often absent or minimal, and by charging large fees to authors. Such publishers and their journals are referred to as 'predatory'. Their motivation is the procurement of evaluation and publication fees. While many predatory publications would be easily recognized as such, some are highly sophisticated and operate websites that mirror prominent mainstream journals. doi:10.1177/0141076814548526

Grammaticos PC. **Medical deontology, meetings, journals, candidacy for higher posts and how to better enjoy life.** *Hellenic Journal of Nuclear Medicine* 2014;17(2):85-86
Today, few physicians care about medical deontology and medical ethics, that is how to behave and respect others when exercising the medical profession. This paper illustrates, with a few examples, what the situation is at present, including issues such as organizing and participating in medical meetings and scientific publishing.

Ioannidis JPA. **How to make more published research true.** *PLoS Medicine* 2014;11(10):e1001747
Currently, many published research

findings are false or exaggerated, and an estimated 85% of research resources are wasted. To improve the credibility and efficiency of scientific research, some practices may help increase the proportion of true research findings, such as: adoption of large-scale collaborative research; replication culture; registration; sharing; reproducibility practices; better statistical methods; standardization of definitions and analyses; more appropriate statistical thresholds; and improvement in study design standards, peer review, reporting and dissemination of research, and training of the scientific workforce. doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.1001747

Marušić A, Hren D, Mansi B, *et al.* **Five-step authorship framework to improve transparency in disclosing contributors to industry-sponsored clinical trial publications.** *BMC Medicine* 2014;12(197)

This article describes a research project led by the Medical Publishing Insights and Practices (MPIP) Initiative to identify current challenges when determining authorship for industry-sponsored clinical trials. As a result, the Five-step Authorship Framework was developed to provide a clear and flexible process to facilitate more transparent and consistent authorship decisions for clinical trial publications, and help readers better assess the credibility of results and perspectives of the authors for medical research more broadly. doi:10.1186/s12916-014-0197-z

Singh Balhara YP, Mishra A. **Compliance of retraction notices for retracted articles on mental disorders with COPE guidelines on retraction.** *Current Science* 2014;107(5):757-760

This study aimed at assessing the compliance of retraction notices for articles on mental disorders with COPE guidelines, and the impact of open access on post-retraction citation of retracted articles. There seemed to be little impact of COPE

guidelines on retractions. Free accessibility of the retraction notice was found to have a significant impact on the post-retraction citation of retracted articles.

LANGUAGE AND WRITING

Anstey A. **Writing style: abstract thoughts.** *British Journal of Dermatology* 2014;171:205-206
A well written abstract is essential to direct potential readers towards your research. Most readers use electronic searches or content lists from favoured journals to identify potentially interesting papers. Data dissemination and retrieval systems operate almost exclusively at the level of titles and abstracts. This article describes main elements for an informative and concise abstract. Some tips from the *AMA Manual Style* are also included. The author also published **Writing style: what's in a title?** *BJD* 2014;170:1003-1004
doi:10.1111/bjd.13181

Whereat A. **Writing publications for advisory boards.** *Medical Writing* 2014;23(4):277-279
Medical communication publications are designed to raise awareness of medicines, cosmetics, and technology. These publications ensure that doctors are informed about the role of new and existing medicines and the literature concerning appropriate prescription for specific patient groups. Advisory boards, consisting of clinicians, are well placed to provide this advice. The pharmaceutical industry often supports independent advisory boards to consider current issues in patient care and to communicate their opinions on how to best deal with these problems.
doi:
10.1179/2047480614Z.00000000252

PUBLISHING

Chinchilla-Rodríguez Z, Miguel S, de Moya-Anegón F. **What factors affect the visibility of Argentinean publications in humanities and social sciences in Scopus? Some evidence beyond the geographic realm of research.** *Scientometrics*

e-pub 29 August 2014
Argentina's patterns of publication in the humanities and social sciences were studied for the period 2003–2012, using the Scopus database and distinguishing the geographic realm of the research. The results indicate that “topics of national scope” have grown and gained international visibility. Citation is apparently not determined only by the geographic realm of research, but also by language of publication, co-authorship, and the profiles of the journals.
doi:10.1007/s11192-014-1414-4

Dai N, Xu D, Zhong X, *et al.* **Build infrastructure in publishing scientific journals to benefit medical scientists.** *Chinese Journal of Cancer Research* 2014;26(1):119-123
Medical journals should optimize their publishing processes and strategies to satisfy the huge need for medical scientists to publish their articles, and then obtain better prestige and impact in scientific and research community. These strategies include optimizing the process of peer-review, utilizing open-access publishing models actively, finding ways of saving costs and getting revenue, smartly dealing with research fraud or misconduct, maintaining sound relationship with pharmaceutical companies, and managing to provide relevant and useful information for clinical practitioners and researchers.
doi:10.3978/
issn.1000-9604.2014.02.10

Murphy F. **Data and scholarly publishing: the transforming landscape.** *Learned Publishing* 2014;27:S3-S7
Research data has become an increasingly critical issue for publishers. Introducing a *Learned Publishing* special issue on research data and publishing, the author outlines some recent initiatives that are responding to policy directives, particularly the Project ODE (Opportunities for Data Exchange), funded by the European Union. She also considers how publishers are working with data and

integrating their practices with other collaborative efforts.
doi: 10.1087/20140502

Van Noorden R, Maher B, Nuzzo R. **The top 100 papers.** *Nature* 2014;514:550-553
Nature asked Thomson Reuters, which now owns the Science Citation Index, to list the 100 most highly cited papers of all time. Surprisingly, many of the world's most famous papers do not make the cut. Most of the 100 papers describe experimental methods or software that have become essential in their fields. The most cited work in history, for example, is a 1951 paper describing an assay to determine the amount of protein in a solution, that has gathered more than 305,000 citations. The list of top journals reveals how powerfully research has been affected by computation and analysis of large data sets. But the position of any particular methods paper or database at the top of the citation charts is also down to luck and circumstance.

RESEARCH EVALUATION

Hall N. **The Kardashian index: a measure of discrepant social media profile for scientists.** *Genome Biology* 2014;15:424
The author proposes the “Kardashian index” (from the name of one of the most followed people on twitter), a measure of discrepancy between a scientist's social media profile and publication record based on the direct comparison of numbers of citations and twitter followers. He has compared the numbers of followers that research scientists have on twitter with the number of citations they have for their peer-reviewed work.
doi: 10.1186/s13059-014-0424-0

SCIENCE

Bastian H. **A stronger post-publication culture is needed for better science.** *PLoS Medicine* 2014;11(12):e1001772
The author states that both improving research quality and reducing waste in science require a stronger post publication culture. Today post

publication evaluation is highly fragmented. Dedicated websites have been developed for discussing and sharing research among authors, and PubMed Commons (for which the author is editor) enables post publication commenting and linkages by the PubMed authorship community. Skill developments should be considered in critiquing research, and capturing post publication intellectual effort more rigorously is essential for better science.

doi: 10.1371/journal.p.med.1001772

Greenhalgh T, Howick J, Maskrey N. **Evidence based medicine:**

a movement in crisis? *BMJ*

2014;348:g3725

The authors argue that, although evidence based medicine has had many benefits, it has also had some negative unintended consequences. They offer a preliminary agenda for the movement's renaissance, refocusing on providing useable evidence that can be combined with context and professional expertise so that individual patients get optimal treatment.

doi: 10.1136/bmj.g3725

Khoury MJ, Ioannidis JPA. **Big data meets public health. *Science***

346(6213):1054

The term "Big Data" refers to volumes of large, complex, linkable information. Beyond genomics and other "omic" fields, Big Data includes medical, environmental, financial, geographic, and social media information. This information can improve health by providing insights into the causes and outcomes of disease, better drug targets for precision medicine, and enhanced disease prediction and prevention. But "Big Error" can plague Big Data. The combination of a strong epidemiological foundation, robust knowledge integration, principles of evidence-based medicine, and an expanded translation research agenda can put Big Data on the right course.

doi: 10.1126/science.aaa2709

SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

Fox CS, Bonaca MA, Ryan JJ, *et al.* **A randomized trial of social media from *Circulation*.** *Circulation* e-pub November 18, 2014

In order to determine whether social media exposure to original articles improves article impact metrics, the authors conducted a randomized trial of social media with a focus on short-term impact. Articles from *Circulation* were randomly assigned to be promoted through the official journal's social media accounts (Facebook and Twitter feeds). The results showed that this social media strategy did not increase the number of times an article was viewed.

doi:10.1161/

CIRCULATIONAHA.114.013509/-/DC1

Kaiser J. **U.S. to expand public access to clinical study results. *Science***

2014;346(6213):1043

Two U.S. government proposals could expand the amount of data from clinical trials. A draft regulation from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services would require companies sponsoring clinical trials to report summary results for drugs and devices that are never approved, not just for those that reach the market. And a proposed policy from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) would expand the requirement - which now applies only to trials regulated by the Food and Drug Administration - to all trials funded by the health agency.

Owens B. **Academia gets social. *The Lancet***

2014;384:1834-1835

The author examines the rise of academic social networking websites, such as *Academia.edu* and *ResearchGate*, and asks researchers how these sites are shaping their careers. These networks operate much like Facebook or LinkedIn: researchers upload their latest research publications, and discuss the technical aspects of their work. The number of papers and datasets uploaded is

mounting at an exponential rate. The rapid feedback metrics on the number of views and downloads of the papers can help researchers decide where to focus their efforts.

Sumner P, Vivian-Griffiths S, Boivin J, *et al.* **The association between exaggeration in health related science news and academic press releases: retrospective observational study. *BMJ***

2014;349:g7015

This article aims to identify the source (press releases or news) of distortions, exaggerations, or changes to the main conclusions drawn from research that could potentially influence a reader's health-related behaviour. Findings show that exaggeration in news is strongly associated with exaggeration in press releases. Improving the accuracy of academic press releases could represent a key opportunity for reducing misleading health related news.

doi: 10.1136/bmj.g7015

Tsou A, Schickore J, Sugimoto CR. **Unpublishable research: examining and organizing the "file drawer".**

Learned Publishing 2014;27(4):253

This article explored through a survey what researchers perceive to be "unpublishable" research. The results suggested that there is a perceived gap in scholarly communication. In particular, there are several types of research besides negative results that are perceived to be unpublishable yet worthy of publication, and a great diversity within and across disciplines as to what constitutes "unpublishable" research.

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