

## The editor's bookshelf

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### EDITORIAL PROCESS

Breuning M, Backstrom J, Brannon J, *et al.* **Reviewer fatigue? Why scholars decline to review their peers' work.** *PS: Political Science & Politics* 2015;48(4):595-600.

The double-blind peer review process is central to publishing in academic journals, but it also relies heavily on the voluntary efforts of anonymous reviewers. The authors of this article empirically investigated the rate at which scholars accepted or declined to review for the *American Political Science Review*, as well as the reasons they gave for declining: almost three-quarters of those who responded to requests agreed to review, and "reviewer fatigue" was only one of many other reasons (also busy professional and personal lives). doi:10.1017/S1049096515000827

Warne V. **Rewarding reviewers - sense or sensibility? A Wiley study explained.** *Learned Publishing* 2016;29(1):41-50.

In July 2015, Wiley surveyed over 170,000 researchers in order to explore peer reviewing experience, attitudes towards recognition and reward for reviewers, and training requirements. Results show that while reviewers choose to review in order to give back to the community, there is more perceived benefit in interacting with the community of a top-ranking journal than a low-ranking one. Reviewers strongly believe that reviewing is inadequately acknowledged at present and should carry more weight in their institutions' evaluation process.

### ETHICAL ISSUES

Dunn AG. **Set up a public registry of competing interests.** *Nature* 2016 May 5;533(7601):9.

According to the author, publishing systems for disclosing competing interests is still fragmented, inconsistent and inaccessible. About half of the studies that involve researchers who hold relevant competing interests fail to declare them, and the common causes are inconsistent requirements across journals and negligence. To solve this problem, the research community should establish a public registry of competing interests, that is an online database of interests declared by researchers to precisely determine the association between competing interests and the potential for bias. doi:10.1038/533009a2016

Heidari S, Babor TF, De Castro P, *et al.* **Sex and gender equity in research: rationale for the SAGER guidelines and recommended use.** *Research Integrity and Peer Review* 2016;1:2.

This article describes the rationale for an international set of guidelines to encourage a more systematic approach to the reporting of sex and gender in research across disciplines. The Sex and Gender Equity in Research (SAGER) guidelines are designed primarily to guide authors in preparing their manuscripts, but they are also useful for editors, as gatekeepers of science, to integrate assessment of sex and gender into all manuscripts as an integral part of the editorial process. doi:10.1186/s41073-016-0007-6

Taichman DB, Backus J, Baethge C, *et al.* **Sharing clinical trial data. A proposal from the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors.** *JAMA* 2016;315(5):467-468.

The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) believes that there is an ethical obligation to responsibly share data generated by interventional clinical

trials because participants have put themselves at risk. As a condition of consideration for publication of a clinical trial report in its member journals, the ICMJE proposes to require authors to share with others the identified individual-patient data (IPD) underlying the results presented in the article (including tables, figures, and appendices or supplementary material) no later than 6 months after publication. The ICMJE also proposes to require that authors include a plan for data sharing as a component of clinical trial registration.

### INFORMATION RETRIEVAL

Navar AM, Pencina MJ, Rymer JA, *et al.* **Use of open access platforms for clinical trial data.** (Letter). *JAMA* 2016;315(12):1283-1284.

Concerns over bias in clinical trial reporting have stimulated calls for more open data sharing. In response, multiple pharmaceutical companies have created mechanisms for investigators to access patient-level clinical trials data. Availability of shared clinical trial data should be promoted and use of individual patient data for validation studies encouraged. doi:10.1001/jama.2016.2374

Whitty JM. **What makes an academic paper useful for health policy?** *BMC Medicine* 2015;13:301.

Getting relevant science and research into policy is essential. There are several barriers, but the easiest to overcome is making papers more relevant and accessible to policymakers. Opinion pieces backed up by footnotes are generally unusable for policy. Objective, rigorous, simply written original papers from multiple disciplines with data can be very helpful. doi:10.1186/s12916-015-0544-8

### LANGUAGE AND WRITING

Whelan J. **Medical journalism: another way to write about science.** *Medical Writing* 2015;24(4):219-221.

True journalism differs from public relations and uncritically reproducing press releases. It involves doing background research into the context surrounding the finding being reported, seeking comments from independent experts, and highlighting the negative as well as positive aspects. In this article, the author pulls together information for medical writers interested in journalism or science writing.  
doi:10.1179/2047480615Z.000000000327

## PUBLISHING

Adishes A, Whiting A. **Power to the people - open access publishing and knowledge translation.** *Occupational Medicine* 2016;66:264-265.

This editorial attempts to demystify the rights and wrongs of self-archiving and explains some of the issues around open access (OA) publishing. There are essentially three major publication options for authors: no cost for publication in a subscription-based journal; OA journal publication where there may be an article processing charge (APC) paid by or on behalf of the authors; and publication in a hybrid journal where a subscription journal provides the option for OA publication upon payment of an APC. *Occupational Medicine* recognised the need for open access as early as 2007, when it became a hybrid journal.  
doi:10.1093/occmed/kqv191

Poltronieri E, Bravo E, Curti M, *et al.* **Open access publishing trend analysis: statistics beyond the perception.** *Information Research* 2016;21(2), paper 712.

This analysis aimed to track the number of OA journals acquiring impact factor, and to investigate the distribution of subject categories pertaining to these journals in the period 2010–2012. Results showed a growth of OA scholarly publishing, with a prevalence for journals relating to medicine and biological science disciplines.

Tennant JP, Waldner F, Jacques DC, *et al.* **The academic, economic and societal impacts of Open**

**Access: an evidence-based review.** *F1000Research* 2016;5:632.

This review aims to be a resource for current knowledge on the impacts of Open Access (OA) by synthesising important research in three major areas of impact: academic, economic and societal. The evidence points to a favorable impact of OA on the scholarly literature through increased dissemination and reuse. Access to the research literature is key for innovative enterprises, and a range of governmental and non-governmental services, and it has the potential to save publishers and research funders considerable amounts of financial resources. Furthermore, OA contributes to advance citizen science initiatives and researchers in developing countries.  
doi:10.12688/f1000research.8460.1

## SCIENCE

Morgan R, George A, Ssali S, *et al.* **How to do (or not to do)...gender analysis in health system research.** *Health Policy and Planning* 2016;1-10.

The article outlines what gender analysis is and how it can be incorporated into health system research (HSR) content, process and outcomes. It recommends exploring whether and how gender power relations affect females and males in health systems through the use of sex disaggregated data, gender frameworks and questions. It also examines gender in HSR process by reflecting on how the research process itself is imbued with power relations, and in HSR outcomes by supporting how power relations can be transformed progressively or at least not exacerbated.  
doi:10.1093/heapol/czw037

Schork NJ. **Personalised medicine: time for one-person trials.** *Nature* 2015;520:609-611.

Every day, millions of people are taking medications that will not help them. The top ten highest-grossing drugs in the United States help between 1 in 25 and 1 in 4 of the people who take them. Recognition that physicians need to take individual variability into account is driving

huge interest in precision medicine, that requires a different type of clinical trial focusing on individual, not average, responses to therapy. But regulatory agencies, researchers and clinicians are rightfully wary of moving away from classical clinical trials, and pharmaceutical companies tend to focus on drugs that are likely to be used by thousands or millions of people.  
doi:10.1038/520609a

## SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

Hartley J. **Is time up for the Flesch measure of reading ease?**

*Scientometrics* 2016;107(3):1523-26. The Flesch Reading Ease measure is widely used to measure the difficulty of text in various disciplines, including scientometrics. This paper argues that the measure is now outdated, used inappropriately, and unreliable. According to the author, it is now time to abandon the notion of one measure and one computer programme being suitable for all purposes. Different computer-based programmes would have greater validity than the Flesch but probably they would still fail to take into account the effects of other variables that affect readability.  
doi:10.1007/s11192-016-1920-7

Woolston C. **Scientists are cautious about public outreach.** *Nature* February 2015.

Scientists think that they should actively participate in public debates about science and technology - but many have misgivings about doing so, according to a survey of nearly 4,000 US researchers. Of the respondents, 87% said that scientists should “take an active role in public policy debates about science and technology”, and just over half said that they had talked about their research with reporters. However, 52% said that oversimplification of science in news reports was a major problem. They have also showed mixed feelings about news and social media.

**Anna Maria Rossi**

*Publishing Unit  
Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Rome  
annamaria.rossi@iss.it*