

## European Association of Science Editors, 13th EASE Conference

10-12 June 2016, Strasbourg, France

In the beautiful city of Strasbourg, France, science editors from around the world met for the 13th EASE conference, the main theme of which was Scientific integrity: editors on the front line. The conference was a wonderful opportunity to learn, challenge and network, bringing together old colleagues and new members in a number of engaging, interactive sessions and workshops.



Following Friday's welcome address by Jean Sibilia, Luc Soler gave a fascinating keynote lecture on the imaging techniques employed and in development by the Research Institute against Digestive Cancer.

Lex Bouter opened proceedings on Saturday with the first plenary lecture on the delicate topic of misconduct. Setting the tone for many discussions during the day, Lex described the insidiousness of sloppy science and selective replication, and the dangers they pose to scientific integrity.

To the delight of the local ducks, the car park unexpectedly became a pond in the afternoon. Attendees braved the storm, dashing between the two centres to make the most of parallel sessions on screening, and the role of editors. Rachael Lammey gave an update on the uptake of the Crossref Similarity Check service and plans to develop functionality. Sioux Cumming provided practical insights and lessons learned from her manuscript screening trial with the INASP Journals Online project. Sun Huh followed with information on image preparation, demonstrating online tools that can be used to detect alterations made to images. Finally, Chris Palmer shared advice on working with statistics and distinguishing between fraud and error in interpretation.

Exploring the role of technical and managing editors, Elise Langdon-Neuner spoke about the disadvantages to non-native English speaking authors who are required to write in an academic style and who paraphrase text to avoid template plagiarism. Helen Penny told us that *The Lancet* only accepts articles subject to changes made during language editing and spoke about the role of technical editors, especially in removing spin. Duncan Nicholas presented the services that can be provided to and by the editorial office to authors, reviewers and editors. Pippa Smart pleaded for authors to be seen as normal people, stressing that not all misconduct is fraudulent and that editors should engender a culture of support.

In the second plenary lecture, Michelle Bergadaà introduced us to her framework of plagiarist personalities,

potential routes of treatment and the methods of dealing with a complaint of plagiarism or fraud.

Paola De Castro moderated an afternoon session in which editorial guidelines from different communities were presented in the perspective of research integrity. David Moher discussed the importance of science reporting guidelines and editorial responsibility to reduce the waste in research.

Anne Cambon-Thomsen presented the CoBRA guideline, developed to standardise citation in scientific articles. Anne emphasised the questionable attitudes that may prevail if the guideline is not used, such as non-optimal use of bioresources and no traceability. On behalf of the EASE Gender Policy Committee, Shirin Heidari presented the SAGER guidelines, which aim to encourage a systematic approach to the sex and gender reporting in science across disciplines. Lidia Arroyo presented GenPORT, an EU FP7 initiative which consists of a community sourced internet portal for researchers, practitioners, policy-makers and organisations working on gender equality and excellence in science, technology and innovation.

Cara Tannenbaum described the Canadian Institute of Gender and Health's new online competency course on researchers' and peer reviewers' knowledge, skills, and self-efficacy for critically appraising sex and gender in biomedical research publications. Sylwia Ufnalska talked about the successful 5 years of EASE Guidelines (2010–15), intended to help scientists and science translators in effective presentation of research results and translation of manuscripts into English. Ines Steffens recognised that certified guidelines and recommendations are an important resource to help increase transparency and quality of science, and avoid conflicts by clarifying roles and responsibilities.

In a parallel session on reducing waste in research and publishing, Paul Glasziou highlighted the diffusion of inadequate reporting of research findings. One step toward fixing that waste is the REWARD campaign, launched in 2014 by *The Lancet* and aimed at encouraging better reporting by improving the appropriateness of research design, methods and analysis; efficient research regulation and management; and transparency. Pia Rotshtein suggested a new form of peer review publication, in which authors submit manuscripts with a detailed description of the research hypothesis and methods. If peer reviews are positive, the journal offers in-principle acceptance. On publication, authors are obliged to make their data fully accessible, which could lead to less waste by shifting the focus from the findings to the hypothesis and methods. Karen Shashok showed some examples of how freelance publication professionals can help reduce waste, by training and educating authors in writing and reporting, in choosing the right journal and in following publication ethics and guidelines. Nathalie Percie du Sert introduced the Experimental Design Assistant, an online resource to help researchers design maximum-output animal experiments, points out inconsistencies or suggest recommendations for methodology and analysis.

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does address international English in terms of grammatical and syntactical problems, but not in terms of style, at least not explicitly. This is increasingly problematic because US English style protocols on punctuation, capitalization, academic degrees and many other issues are certainly not self-evident in much of the world. This is relevant not only to writers and editors in the UK, but also those in countries in continental Europe, Asia and Africa, which are rapidly developing their own “Englishes”.

Finally, I understand that indexing has become something of a lost art in the age of electronic search engines and

so-called automatic indexing, but the index in the print edition of *Scientific Style and Format* is rather inadequate for a reference book.

All in all, whether you choose the electronic or print version, *Scientific Style and Format* is an essential reference work for all scientific copy editors.

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On a brighter Sunday morning after a delightful evening of local cuisine at Brasserie Les Haras in Strasbourg, attendees chose between sessions on managing cases of misconduct, or peer review and research integrity.

Mirjam Curno moderated the first of the split sessions, on managing cases of misconduct. Christiaan Sterken navigated the delicate art of whistleblowing, and Elizabeth Moylan discussed the navigation of ethical cases, from the role of publishers to collaboration between editors.

A session on research on peer review and research integrity highlighted some of the work being done by some of those involved in the PEERE initiative, a 4-year EU-funded research programme that aims for a deeper understanding of peer review. Flaminio Squazzoni described a simulation model of peer review that allows testing of assumptions relating to open/closed peer review and the number and status of peer reviewers. Bahar Mehmani introduced Elsevier’s reviewer recognition platform, which allows peer reviewers to collect and display activity in their own personal profile, and allows researchers to sign up to be peer reviewers. Bahar also described two pilot studies in Elsevier journals: publishing peer review reports alongside published articles, and a cross-review system that engages peer reviewers in a forum to discuss cases of conflicting recommendations. Michael Willis presented the findings of Wiley’s peer review survey. In general, satisfaction with peer review and views on its effectiveness had not changed significantly compared with previous surveys, but there is a huge desire for more training. The survey also hinted that increasing the involvement of early-career researchers and those from less well represented regions could help with the shortage of peer reviewers.



**Ana Marušić, EASE President**

To end the session, Ana Marušić described an ongoing systematic review of qualitative studies of peer review and motivations.

In the final session of Sunday morning, Al Weigel began by describing the positive impact that a certification programme can



**Much discussion took place around the posters in the foyer**

have in validating the activities of editors and promote high standards of integrity. David Moher spoke about ensuring journal editors work with a competency that is reliable, and suggested Editors be prepared to challenge and influence research practice by insisting on the highest standards. In a somewhat provocative presentation, Donald Samulack advocated for increased awareness and resources to tackle an emerging black market of science. He gave examples of emerging unethical, deceptive and predatory practices which threaten to undermine the integrity of research publishing.

Rounding off the conference, the final plenary was given by Boris Barbour, who revisited the themes of integrity and misconduct from backstage at PubPeer. Barbour gave an overview of some of the forms of misconduct apparent in science and community response and the disincentives researchers are faced with when it comes to avoiding, reporting or correcting misconduct. Barbour suggested that a less punitive culture could promote a greater willingness for self-regulation and correction.

A fantastic selection of posters was submitted for display; the winners are featured on page 65.

Bookending the conference, a number of optional workshops took place on Friday and Monday, including statistics for editors with Christopher Palmer, a COPE workshop with Mirjam Curno, and How to be a successful journal editor with Pippa Smart.

The 14th General assembly will take place in Bucharest, Romania, in 2018. We look forward to seeing you there.

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