News notes

Pharmaceutical companies and trial transparency

The AllTrials team (alltrials.net) has assessed the trial registration and reporting policies of the major pharmaceutical companies. The results (*BMJ* 2017;358:j3334) reveal that not only are policies often vague, ambiguous, or difficult to interpret, but they commonly don't mention trials on unlicensed treatments or phase 4 trials. Most of the companies have a public policy about registering and reporting results from trials, but only about half have policies relating to past trials.

Make Data Count

California Digital Library, DataCite (datacite.org) and DataONE (dataone.org) are collaborating on a project relating to the collection of usage and citation metrics for data objects. Supported by the Alfred P Sloan Foundation, the team will now launch a service that will collate and expose data level metrics. There is more information on the project, called Make Data Count, at makedatacount.org.

No DEAL yet in Germany

Protracted negotiations between the publisher Elsevier and Projeckt DEAL, a consortium of German institutions and libraries, have continued after many DEAL members did not renew their subscriptions to Elsevier journals. The publisher agreed to restore access as negotiations continued, but in October 2017, five leading German scientists resigned from their editorial positions at Elsevier journals in protest at the publisher's stance on DEAL's desire for an open access agreement for Germany. As reported in *Science* (13 October 2017), subscriptions with both Elsevier and Springer Nature have been extended to the end of 2018 while discussions continue.

Tidying up the archives

Molecular and Cellular Biology (mcb.asm.org), one of the journals of the American Society for Microbiology, has published a series of retractions and corrections stemming from a retrospective screen of figures. Last year, with the aim of setting the scientific record straight, the journal's editors took on the task of checking all papers published since 2010 (over 2500 articles) for potential duplications within images. As a result, from May to October 2017 the journal published three retractions and 44 corrections citing problems with figures. Most of these seem to be inadvertent errors in the figure production process, and the authors provided the correct version of images. The journal continues to check new submitted manuscripts for image duplications and manipulations.

MECA Initiative

Five developers of editorial management software have agreed to collaborate on developing standards for sharing manuscripts between publishers. Aries Systems (Editorial Manager), Clarivate Analytics (ScholarOne), eJournal Press (eJPress), HighWire (BenchPress), and PLOS (Aperta) set up a working group called Manuscript Exchange Common Approach (MECA; manuscriptexchange.org). The group aims to develop standards on what needs to be shared with a submitted manuscript, to minimize the amount of additional work required when rejected articles are submitted to another journal, for example. The MECA group is gathering feedback on a set of standards and is preparing a common manuscript sharing format (based on XML), with the aim of implementing standards into software during 2018.

Metadata 2020

A diverse group of researchers, developers, and publishers have formed the Metadata 2020 collaboration (metadata2020.org). Launched in September, the group aims to promote "richer, connected, and reusable, open metadata for all research outputs, which will advance scholarly pursuits for the benefit of society." Metadata is information about data, and good-quality metadata enables linking of different resources to facilitate new discoveries and services. The Metadata 2020 collaboration aims to gather and provide resources for publishers, librarians, funders, researchers, and anyone that may benefit richer, connected metadata.

Preprint journal clubs

The recent growth in preprint servers and publishing platforms has prompted the development of services to promote peer review of preprints. Two recent additions are Preprint Journal Club (preprintjc.org), launched in July by Academic Karma, and PREreview (prereview.org), created by Authorea and released in September. Both platforms enable researchers to post reviews of preprints with a focus on group (journal club-style) review.

Publishers, SciHub and ResearchGate

Following Elsevier's legal action and subsequent award of damages against Sci-Hub, the website that provides free access to articles by bypassing publisher paywalls, the American Chemical Society has taken its own legal action. Sci-Hub's impact continues to be felt, with the site proving very popular, even for users who already have legitimate access. Both these publishers have also taken legal action against the more established scholarly network site ResearchGate (researchgate.com), and are part of a coalition of five publishers seeking to prevent their copyrighted content appearing on the network. As reported in *Nature* (10 October 2017), the action follows a letter from the International Association of Scientific, Technical, and Medical Publishers, asking ResearchGate to filter uploaded articles depending on copyright status.

New journals from BMJ and JAMA

Two major medical journal publishers have launched new general journals. *BMJ Open Science* (openscience.bmj.com) aims to publish 'preclinical and basic research that is closely aligned with medicine' and incorporates many features of open science, such as consensus-based open peer review and support for preprints and replication studies. *JAMA Network Open* (sites.jamanetwork.com/jamanetworkopen) is an open access journal offering two licences: CC-BY and 'JN-OA', exclusive to JAMA (whereby authors do not retain copyright, but the publication cost is less). The new journal will also provide a publication venue for papers not accepted by JAMA or another JAMA Network journal. *JAMA Network Open* will be open for submissions in early 2018.

25 Years of INASP

INASP, the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications, marked its 25th anniversary with a series of events and publications during 2017. You can read more on the INASP website (www.inasp.info/about/inasp25) and reflect on the achievements of initiatives such as AuthorAid, Journals Online, HINARI and others.

LEARN Toolkit

The LEARN Project was created to help institutions manage their research data, based on the LERU (League of European Research Universities) Roadmap for Research Data, published in 2013. The LEARN Project has published a toolkit for best practice in research data management. The toolkit includes much that is relevant to journals and editors working with authors and their institutions to achieve best practice. The toolkit is available from the LEARN website (learn-rdm.eu), alongside many other resources.

The State of Open Data

A new report from *Digital Science* (digitalscience.com) explores views of open data, presenting findings from a new survey alongside analysis. The State of Open Data 2017 report found an increase in awareness and engagement in data sharing compared with 2016, with 74% of researchers curating their data for sharing, 83% aware of open data sets, and 80% willing to use open data in their own research. The full report is available on Figshare.com.

Embargo-free green OA

Publishers' support for green open access (OA), whereby authors post a version of their article on a repository, is generally on the basis that there is an embargo period, commonly of 12 months. The publisher Emerald (emeraldgrouppublishing.com) has announced that it will no longer require an embargo period for author-accepted manuscripts across all of its 300+ journals.

Male-only pronoun paper retracted

An article in the journal *Annals of Surgery* that used only male pronouns when referring to surgeons was retracted by the journal in response to readers' reactions on Twitter, reports Retraction Watch (retractionwatch.com; 24 July 2017). The issue seems to have arisen during the translation of the article, originally an address delivered in Polish. The journal has since published a revised version of the article (*Annals of Surgery* 2017;256:703).

Peer review charity incentive

The editors of the journal *Environmental Earth Sciences* have a new way of attracting peer reviewers. For every peer review completed, the publisher, Springer Nature, makes a donation to Filter of Hope, a non-profit humanitarian organisation that distributes filters to make contaminated water safe to drink. In its first nine months, the 'Every Review Counts' scheme has resulted in about 600 filters being distributed.

A lifetime word limit?

An article in *Nature* (17 October 2017) discusses the idea of allocating all researchers a lifetime word limit. The intention would be to shift the purpose of authorship away from acquiring publications and back to its fundamental aim of sharing knowledge efficiently. The article's author, Brian Martinson, ponders whether such a quota could force researchers to ask themselves: "is this project I'm pursuing worth the words it will cost me?" and discusses the myriad consequences, positive and negative, that may arise from such a scenario. One consequence not discussed is the likely rise in value of good-quality editorial services in such a landscape!

Geosciences preprints

Earth scientists wishing to post preprints of their work now have a choice of two new subject-specific platforms. ESSOAr (Earth and Space Science Open Archive) is being developed by the American Geophysical Union in conjunction with the publisher Wiley, with a demo version planned for December. Meanwhile, EarthArXiv (eartharxiv.org), launched in October, is led by a group of geoscientists working independently and is built on the Open Science Framework Preprints platform. As reported in *Science* (22 September 2017), there have historically been regional differences in use of preprints in geosciences, so both groups are looking to encourage usage and to experiment.

Maths journal editors start rival journal

In July, the four editors-in-chief of the *Journal of Algebraic Combinatorics* announced their intention to resign and start a rival journal, to be called *Algebraic Combinatorics*. As with previous 'mutinies', the action was related to open access and publication charges. The editors wanted the journal to be open access, with lower costs, but were unable to get agreement from the publisher, Springer Nature. As reported in *Inside Higher Ed* (insidehighered.com; 31 July 2017), the new journal will be set up with the support of open access advocacy group MathOA, and financial support from Centre Mersenne. Initially the new journal will be free to publish in, and will be fully open access. Springer Nature is appointing a new editorial board for its journal.

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