

The editor's bookshelf

Bookshelf is compiled by Anna Maria Rossi (annamaria.rossi@iss.it). Please contact Anna Maria if you wish to send items or become a member of the EASE journal blog (<http://ese-bookshelf.blogspot.co.uk>) and see your posts published in the journal.

EDITORIAL PROCESS

Allen H, Cury A, Gaston T, *et al.*
What does better peer review look like? Underlying principles and recommendations for better practice. *Learned Publishing* 2019;32(2)

The authors conducted a literature review of best practice in peer review. They identified five principles for better peer review: content integrity, content ethics, fairness, usefulness, and timeliness. For each of these, they developed a set of recommendations, accompanied by a detailed checklist. (doi:10.1002/leap.1222)

Matarese V, Shashok K. **Transparent attribution of contributions to research: aligning guidelines to real-life practices.** *Publications* 2019;7(2):24

The authors of the paper suggest a change to the Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CReDIT), which recognizes contributions - but fails to recognize appropriate credit for persons who contribute as non-authors. They reviewed key concepts of authorship and contributorship and examined the range of non-author contributions that may (or may not) be acknowledged. Then they described different types of editorial support provided by (non-author) translators, authors' editors and writers, and explained why it is not always acknowledged. (doi:10.3390/publications7020024)

Editorial. **Three-year trial shows support for recognizing peer reviewers.** *Nature* 2019;568(275)
 In 2016, *Nature* launched a referee-recognition trial. Once a paper has

been reviewed and accepted, authors are given the option of thanking the referees for their contribution in the paper, with the reviewers' consent. Almost all authors opted in to the trial, and it has resulted in about 80% of *Nature* papers having one or more reviewers named and thanked. The success of the trial has increased the number of journals participating in the initiative. (doi: 10.1038/d41586-019-01162-1)

ETHICAL ISSUES

Bauchner H, Fontanarosa PB, Flanagan A. **Conflicts of interests, authors, and journals. New challenges for a persistent problem.** *JAMA* 2018; 320(22):2315-2318
 Despite the increased awareness of conflicts of interest (COIs) by physicians, problems with its reporting by authors of articles in biomedical journals persist. Problems include failure to disclose financial and other important potential COIs, as well as incomplete disclosures, inconsistent disclosures, and misinterpretation of what represents a relevant disclosure. (doi:10.1001/jama.2018.17593)

Smart P, Gaston, T. **How prevalent are plagiarized submissions? Global survey of editors.** *Learned Publishing* 2019;32:47-56.

A survey by EASE asked for journal editors to share their experiences of text similarity and plagiarism in submitted articles. More than 40% of editors reported no experience of suspicious submissions. Of those that did, cases were highest for Asian editors, but most problems identified in articles were resolved during submission, indicating relatively minor problems, rather than more serious attempted fraud. The authors stated that the publishing industry should be careful not to overstate the incidence of unethical behaviour, but equally, that raising awareness of the ethical expectations of authors and of editors would be beneficial, and that there is a need for good practice guidelines. (doi:10.1002/leap.1218)

Thelwall M. **Do females create higher impact research? Scopus citations and Mendeley readers for articles from five countries.** *Journal of Informetrics* 2018;12(4):1031-1041
 This article assesses whether there are gender differences in the average citations and/or Mendeley readers of academic publications with first authors from India, Spain, Turkey, the UK and the USA in up to 251 fields with at least 50 male and female authors. Results show that there is a gender citation imbalance, and also that the conclusions from a gender analysis depend on the field normalization method. (doi:10.1016/j.joi.2018.08.005)

Weber-Wulff D. **Plagiarism detectors are a crutch, and a problem.** *Nature* 2019;567:435

Academics and editors need to stop pretending that plagiarism-detection software always catches recycled text and start reading more carefully. According to the author, those systems can be useful for flagging up problems, but not for discriminating between originality and plagiarism. She also explains reasons why duplication evades detection.

LANGUAGE AND WRITING

Ten steps to writing an effective abstract. *San Francisco Edit* 2019
 The abstract is usually the first section read. It must be concise and easy to read and must cover the important points of the paper. The best way to write it is to start with a draft of the complete manuscript and follow 10 steps that are listed in this blog.

Eldawlatly AA. **Special issue on "how to write a scientific paper".** *Saudi Journal of Anaesthesia* 2019;13, Suppl S1:1.

The article provides details on the factors involved in optimal journal selection, giving insights into how to identify suitable journals, why particular criteria are important and ideal methods to approach this task.

It also provides notes on supporting submissions with an effective cover letter.

(doi:10.4103/sja.SJA_807_18)

White R. **Publication planning and patient-reported outcomes: demonstrating value in a multi-stakeholder era.** *Medical Writing* 2018; 27(4):4

Patient-reported outcomes (PROs) are an essential element of demonstration of the value of a health intervention. Effective planning of PRO publications requires an in-depth understanding of the planned studies, the opportunities these provide for publications, and how clinicians, patients, and caregivers may contribute as authors to provide validation of results. PRO publications must be written in a clear and engaging way, explaining the instrument in simple terms, and addressing the “so what?” question. And PRO publications must always thank the patients.

PUBLISHING

Brainard J. **Rethinking retractions.** *Science* 2018;362(6413):390-393

Retraction Watch, the largest-ever database of retracted articles, suggests that burgeoning numbers reflect better oversight, not a crisis in science. The author analyzed about 10,500 retracted journal articles. He found that although the absolute number of annual retractions has grown, the rate of increase has slowed; much of the rise appears to reflect improved oversight at a growing number of journals; and relatively few authors are responsible for a disproportionate number of retractions.

(doi:10.1126/science.362.6413.390)

Hartley J. **Never on a Sunday! Is there a best day for submitting an article for publication?** *LSE Impact of Social Sciences Blog* Jan 29, 2019

Large data sets can now be quickly analyzed to assess whether or not certain features can affect the chances of a research paper being accepted for publication. In this blog the author

considers data sets from articles in four journals that have examined whether or not the day on which an article is submitted for publication might affect whether or not it is accepted for publication. The results suggest that it is better to submit papers in the middle of the week rather than at the weekend!

Heidari S, Bachelet V. **Sex and gender analysis for better science and health equity.** *The Lancet* 2018;392(10157):P1500-1502

Researchers, funders, and editors do not treat the gendered aspects of health research and practice as a priority, undervalue the importance of the gender bias in academic research, and neglect to act. The Sex and Gender Equity in Research (SAGER) guidelines, launched in 2016, encourage systematic reporting of sex and gender dimensions in research as a matter of routine. The scientific community should endorse and enforce the guidelines. (doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(18)32619-9)

Patience GS, Galli F, Patience PA, *et al.* **Intellectual contributions meriting authorship: survey results from the top cited authors across all science categories.** *PLoS ONE* 2019;14(1):e0198117

The authors surveyed nearly 6,000 of the top cited authors in all science categories. Results showed that most authors agreed with the National Institutes of Health authorship guidelines and granted authorship to individuals who drafted the manuscript, analyzed and interpreted data, and proposed ideas. However, thousands of them also valued supervision and contributing comments to the manuscript.

Sever R, Eisen M, Inglis J. **Plan U: Universal access to scientific and medical research via funder preprint mandates.** *PLoS Biology* 2019;17(6):e3000273.

Preprint servers such as arXiv and bioRxiv represent a highly successful and relatively low cost mechanism for providing free access to research findings. If all funding agencies were

to mandate posting of preprints by grantees—an approach we term Plan U (for “universal”)—free access to the world’s scientific output for everyone would be achieved with minimal effort. Moreover, the existence of all articles as preprints would create a fertile environment for experimentation with new peer review and research evaluation initiatives, which would benefit from a reduced barrier to entry because hosting and archiving costs were already covered.

(doi:10.1371/journal.pbio.3000273)

RESEARCH EVALUATION

Amrhein V, Greenland S, McShane B. **Retire statistical significance.** *Nature* 2019;567:305-307

More than 800 signatories call for an end to the false belief that crossing the threshold of statistical significance shows a result is real. The authors advocate that we no longer treat *p* values, confidence intervals, or other statistical measures as categorical, and learn to embrace uncertainty. They suggest statistical significance be retired, and use confidence intervals as compatibility intervals.

Baethge C, Goldbeck-Wood S, Mertens S. **SANRA—a scale for the quality assessment of narrative review articles.** *Research Integrity and Peer Review* 2019;4:5

There is currently no instrument available to assess the quality of narrative reviews. In response to this gap, the authors developed SANRA, the Scale for the Assessment of Narrative Review Articles. It is a simple scorecard for reviewers to use when reviewing narrative articles, but it can be integrated into the work of editors and authors, as well.

(doi:10.1186/s41073-019-0064-8)

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Anna Maria Rossi
Scientific Communication Unit
Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Rome
annamaria.rossi@iss.it