

## The Editor's Bookshelf

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### ECONOMICS AND FUNDING

Corbyn Z. **Price doesn't always buy prestige in open access.** *Nature* 22 Jan. 2013

An online interactive tool suggests that the open access journals that charge the most aren't necessarily the most influential. This freely accessible tool, called *Cost Effectiveness for Open Access Journals* and launched in January 2013, incorporates pricing and prestige information for 657 open access journals indexed by Thomson Reuters. The data show a journal's Article Influence score against its fee per article.

doi: 10.1038/nature.2013.12259

Gantz P. **Digital licenses replace print prices as accurate reflection of real journal costs.** *Professional/Scholarly Publishing Bulletin* 2012;11(3):1-5

*Library Journal's* Annual Periodical Price Survey 1990-2010 showed a more than six-fold increase in journal prices since 1990. Institutional libraries have shifted their purchasing patterns from print to digital holdings, and are pursuing licensing agreements that provide perpetual digital access to a body of content, instead of purchasing subscription to individual journals.

### EDITORIAL PROCESS

Baethge C, Franklin J, Mertens S. **Substantial agreement of referee recommendations at a general medical journal – A peer review evaluation at Deutsches Ärzteblatt International.** *PLoS ONE* 2013;8(5): e61401

This study analyzed the peer review process at Deutsches Ärzteblatt International asking: What is the distribution of reviewer

recommendations? To what degree do the editors follow reviewer recommendations? What is the agreement among reviewers in evaluating manuscripts? Are reviewer recommendations associated with the number of future citations? doi:10.1371/journal.pone.006140

Joshi Y. **Copy-editing of research papers: who and why and why not.** *Current Science* 2013;104(2):171

This commentary explores the "who and why" of copy-editing. The need for copy-editing to ensure the quality of research papers and the importance of hiring an editor with language and subject expertise are evinced. While it is tempting to believe that good copy-editing contributes to raising the impact factor of a journal, the author couldn't find any research to support this.

Vinther S, Nielsen OH, Rosenberg J, *et al.* **Same review quality in open versus blinded peer review in "Ugeskrift for Laeger".** *Danish Medical Journal* 2012;59(8):A4479

This study compared the quality of reviews produced by identifiable and anonymous reviewers working for the journal of the Danish Medical Association (*Ugeskrift for Laeger-Ufl*), and characterized authors' and reviewers' attitudes towards different peer review systems (open, single-blinded and double-blinded). The results showed the same quality in reviews, but many reviewers and authors preferred anonymity.

### ETHICAL ISSUES

Bala MM, Akl EA, Sun X, *et al.* **Randomized trials published in higher vs. lower impact journals differ in design, conduct, and analysis.** *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology* 2013 (66):286-295

Rigorously designed and conducted randomized controlled trials (RCTs) provide high-quality evidence regarding the effects of health care interventions. This study compared the study design, conduct, analysis and/or reporting of a large cohort of RCTs published in

higher vs lower impact journals. RCTs published in higher impact journals were less prone to risk of bias. doi: 10.1016/j.jclinepi.2012.10.005

Begley CG. **Six red flags for suspect work.** *Nature* 2013;497:433-434

The author presents six questions that every author, editor, reviewer and reader should ask themselves when evaluating a research paper: Were experiments performed blinded? Were basic experiments repeated? Were all the results presented? Were there positive and negative controls? Were reagents validated? Were statistical tests appropriate?

Fanelli D. **Negative results are disappearing from most disciplines and countries.** *Scientometrics* 2012;90:891-904

One of the most worrying distortions in scientific knowledge is the loss of negative data. This study analyzed over 4,600 papers published between 1990 and 2007, measuring the frequency of papers that, having declared to have "tested" a hypothesis, reported a positive result. The frequency of positive outcomes increased by over 22%. The increase was stronger in the social sciences and some biomedical disciplines. doi: 10.1007/s11192-011-0494-7

Loder E, Godlee F, Barbour V, *et al.* **Restoring the integrity of the clinical trial evidence base.** *BMJ* 2013;346:f3601

Hidden or misreported information from clinical trials is one of the leading scientific problems of our time. Peter Doshi and colleagues call on institutions that funded and investigators who conducted abandoned trials to publish (in the case of unpublished trials) or formally correct or republish (in the case of misreported trials) their studies. Their RIAT (restoring invisible and abandoned trials) proposal described here provides a minimum set of criteria for the proper and responsible publication and republication of abandoned studies. doi: 10.1136/bmj.f3601

Wager E. **The UK should lead the way on research integrity.** *BMJ*

2013;346:f2348

The *Concordat to Support Research Integrity*, published by Universities UK, states that research institutions should be responsible for investigating misconduct, according to the COPE guidelines. It recognizes the need for a coordinated approach to research integrity, thus global alignment of guidelines and standards in research integrity are essential. doi: 10.1136/bmj.f2348

#### LANGUAGE AND WRITING

Barroga EF. **Essential modules for teaching publication writers.** *Medical Writing* 2013;22(1):4-9

This article introduces 16 essential modules by which medical writers can enhance their ability to help researchers communicate effectively. Each module addresses aspects of writing, editing, and publishing articles. A competency evaluation system consisting of 14 competency areas is also described. doi: 10.1179/204748012X13560931063555

Bauchner H, Henry R, Golub RM.

**The restructuring of structured abstracts. Adding a table in the Results section.** *JAMA*

2013;309(5):491-492

Today most medical journals use structured abstracts for research articles, although the sections and subheadings vary. *JAMA* introduces the next generation of structured abstract, featuring a table in the Results section that displays the key findings to convey the major results in a clear, concise and efficient manner.

doi: 10.1001/jama.2013.76

#### PUBLISHING

Eger T, Scheufen M, Meierrieks D.

**The determinants of open access publishing: survey evidence from Germany.** *Social Science Research Network* 13 March, 2013

A 2012 survey showed significant differences between the scientific disciplines with respect to researchers'

awareness of and experience with both open access journals and self-archiving. Results suggested that the relevance of OA journals within a discipline drives the OA decision. Several other aspects like copyright law, age or profession can play a role. doi: 10.2139/ssrn.2232675

Hopewell S, Ravaut P, Baron G, et al.

**Effect of editors' implementation of CONSORT guidelines on the reporting of abstracts in high impact medical journals: interrupted time series analysis.** *BMJ* 2012;344:e4178

This article investigated the effect of the publication of the CONSORT for Abstracts guidelines and different journals' editorial policies to implement them on the quality of abstracts of randomized trials published in five high impact, general medical journals. The guidelines improved the reporting when actively implemented by a specific editorial policy. Passive dissemination of information was generally ineffective. doi:10.1136/bmj.e4178

#### RESEARCH EVALUATION

Buschman M, Michalek A. **Are alternative metrics still alternative?**

*Bulletin of the Association for Information Science and Technology* 2013;39(4):35-39

Alternative metrics provide a more complete view of peer response to scholarly writings. A better categorization of scholarly impact would cover usage, captures, mentions and social media in addition to citations. Metrics should include mentions in blogs and other nontraditional formats, open review forums, electronic book downloads, library circulation counts, bookmarks, tweets and more.

Rigby J. **Looking for the impact of peer review: does count of funding acknowledgments really predict research impact?** *Scientometrics* 2013;94:57-73

This paper examines an important bibliometric relationship that has been assumed to exist between the count of the funding acknowledgements received by

a research paper and the paper's citation impact within the context of a single journal. The results suggest that at the level of a specific journal the link is evident but weak.

doi: 10.1007/s11192-012-0779-5

#### SCIENCE

Ismail SA, McDonald A, Dubois E, et al. **Assessing the state of health research in the Eastern Mediterranean Region.** *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 2013;106(6):224-233

This review presents an assessment of health research systems across the Eastern Mediterranean region based on publicly available literature and data sources. The review finds that, while there have been important improvements in productivity in the region since the early 1990s, overall research performance is poor, with critical deficits in system stewardship, research training and human resource development, and basic data surveillance. It identifies key areas for a regional strategy and how to address challenges.

doi: 10.1258/jrsm.2012.120240

#### SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

Handjani F, Habibzadeh F. **Medical writing in the Middle East.** *Medical Writing* 2013;22(2):96-98

Over the past three decades, Middle Eastern countries have made substantial progress in both conducting and publishing scientific research. Regional initiatives, such as the foundation of the Eastern Mediterranean Association of Medical Editors and the AuthorAID project in the Eastern Mediterranean, have helped, but challenges remain. Improved training and educational programmes are needed, and the concept, importance, and principles of scientific writing need to be incorporated earlier in existing educational programmes.

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