

Quality publishing in a digital environment

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Publishers, editors and trust

- "It must be true, I read it in a journal"

- Responsibility in the scientific community
 - To the development of knowledge
 - To the public
 - To readers
 - To authors
 - To reviewers, editorial boards, to parent organisations and Associations, to publishers

It's not all ethics ...

- This talk will cover
- Authors
- Readers and quality
- Ethics
- Problems (and some solutions)



SUPPORTING AUTHORS

Do you understand your authors ...

Will my peers read this?

Will publishing here give me sufficient credit?

How quickly can I get my article published?

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Research

These articles should report original research studies that can improve decision making in medical practice, policy, education, or research and will be understandable by general medical readers.

All research studies published in the BMJ must follow the World Medical Association's Declaration of Helsinki. In this, we aim to appraise the ethical aspects of research, whatever the nature of the research, audit, and sometimes the very rare occasions that we publish research that does not meet these criteria.

To learn more about the kind of research we offer to authors of research, please read our [Author Services](#) page. And, as it is not always possible to submit research, particularly at busy times, we have a [checklist](#) that may help you decide whether your research is suitable for publication. Please note that we welcome research with "negative" results - as long as their research is new, and relevant to general readers and the medical community.

You may also want to know more about the BMJ publishing model, and read our [FAQs](#) about it.

We audit the performance of all BMJ research articles to assess their impact on readers and the wider world.

The BMJ's Impact Factor is 12.827 (ISI Web of Science). In October 2008, we had 5.9 million unique users download 5.9 million pages (ABCe audit, October 2008).

Further down this page there are full details on how to submit your research to the BMJ, but first please read this information on our [editorial policies](#).

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The following links provide guidance generally applicable to the submission of manuscripts and preparation of artwork as well as information on further matters of interest to journal authors. Please be sure to view the Author Guidelines by Journal as the right for specific information on submitting to your chosen journal.

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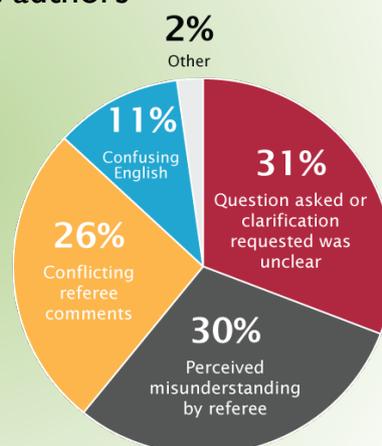
How good are ...

- Your author guidelines?
- Your instructions for submitting?
- Your journal policies?
- Your feedback and advice?
 - For both accepted and rejected articles?

Authors don't understand reviewer feedback

- From Edanz survey of Chinese authors

- Is this the same for all authors?



<http://www.edanzediting.com/white-paper>

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- Timely publication
- Confidentiality
 - Data protection

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Peer review ...

**it is slow, expensive,
largely a lottery,
poor at detecting
errors and fraud,
anti-innovatory,
biased, and prone to
abuse**



Richard Smith

Richard Smith, BMJ Blogs, March 22, 2010

Peer review types

- Double blind
 - Authors' and reviewers' names withheld
- Single blind
 - Authors' name revealed to reviewer
- Open
 - Authors' and reviewers' names known to each other
- Public
 - As Open, but review published with article

The screenshot displays the BMC Cancer journal website. The article title is "Time trends in municipal distribution patterns of cancer mortality in Spain". The authors listed are Gonzalo López-Abente, Nuria Aragonés, Beatriz Pérez-Gómez, Marina Pollán, Javier García-Pérez, Rebeca Ramis, and Pablo Fernández-Navarro. The article is marked as "Highly accessed" and "Open Access".

On the right side of the page, under "Viewing options", the following options are listed: Abstract, Full text (PDF 3.5MB, ePub 794KB), and Additional files. Under "Associated material", the options are: PubMed record, Article history, Readers' comments, Pre-publication history, and Related literature. The "Readers' comments" option is circled in red.

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Pre-publication history Highly accessed

Time trends in municipal distribution patterns of cancer mortality in Spain
 Gonzalo López-Abente*, Nuria Aragonés, Beatriz Pérez-Gómez, Marina Pollán, Javier García-Pérez, Rebeca Ramis and Pablo Fernández-Navarro

* Corresponding author: Gonzalo López-Abente glabente@isciii.es

BMC Cancer 2014, **14**:535 doi:10.1186/1471-2407-14-535

Pre-publication versions of this article and reviewers' reports

Original Submission - Version 1	Manuscript	06 Feb 2014
Reviewer's Report	Wan Qing Chen	20 May 2014
Reviewer's Report	Roberto Zanetti	05 Jun 2014
Resubmission - Version 2	Manuscript Author's comment	09 Jun 2014
Reviewer's Report	Wan Qing Chen	02 Jul 2014
Editorial acceptance		04 Jul 2014
Published		24 Jul 2014

BMC Cancer
Epidemiology, prevention and public health
Volume 14

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Review – experiments

- **Quality of review**
 - "Methodologically accurate" or novel and exciting?
 - PLoS One and other mega journals
- **Collaborative review**
 - Reviewers discuss and agree recommendation
 - Frontiers journals
- **Cascading review**
 - "Top" journal refers (good)rejections to other journals
 - BMC journals, Wiley and F1000Research
- **Open/closed reviews**
 - Article made public for comment whilst being reviewed
 - Copernicus journals, F1000Research

How to improve reviews? Questions? Checklists?

- Some journals use questions
 - Does the paper add significantly to the research?
 - Are the conclusions supported by the data
 - Do you have any ethical concerns
- Some use checklists
 - Importance of the topic
 - Quality of writing
 - Conceptual rigor
 - Methodological rigorous

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Reviewer Report Form

Please note: We only need your responses (codes) to the question

Before completing your review, please read carefully the Instructions to Form responses; 2) the Comments to the Editor; and 3) the comments to the author.

Please do not mail a hard copy as well.

A. Importance of the topics/issues to the field of consumer research

4 Extremely important
3 Important
2 Modest
1 Trivial
0 Unimportant

B. Quality of writing and other presentations (figures, tables, exhibits)

4 Superior
3 Good
2 Minor Problems
1 Major Problems
0 Completely Inadequate

C. Conceptual rigor (Clarity of objectives, treatment of relevant literature,

4 Superior
3 Good
2 Minor Problems
1 Major Problems
0 Completely Inadequate

Working with reviewers

- Select the right reviewer
- Provide support
- Provide guidance
- Reviewers are only advisors
 - They should not make the publishing decision!

Review – the basics

- No matter which system ...
 - The right system for you - suitable for the community
 - Managed well
 - Respectful of privacy/confidentiality
 - Transparent
 - Good guidance – authors and reviewers
 - Suitable rewards for the reviewers



ETHICS

Ethical problems

- **Bad research**
 - Lack of ethical approval
 - Lack of adherence to reporting guidelines
- **Author problems**
 - Disagreements, disputes
- **Plagiarism, copyright**
 - Theft of ideas and content
- **Conflicts of interest**
 - Authors, reviewers, editors, owners

What is ethical research?

- Require authors to follow the Declaration of Helsinki
- Statement of ethics approval
 - With name of ethics committee, board, ID, etc.
 - Participant informed consent
- But ... “full ethical approval” does not guarantee “ethical”
- Whose standards do you accept – those of the authors’ country, or your own country?

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Reporting guidelines

- EQUATOR NETWORK
 - <http://www.equator-network.org>
- The EQUATOR Network works to improve the reliability and value of medical research literature by promoting transparent and accurate reporting of research studies
- Links to guidelines – CONSORT, etc.
- Toolkits for authors, editors, peer reviewers, etc.

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**Enhancing the QUALity and Transparency
Of health Research**



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The resource centre for good reporting of health research studies

Library for health research reporting

The Library contains a comprehensive searchable database of reporting guidelines and also links to other resources relevant to research reporting.

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Key reporting guidelines

CONSORT	Full Record Checklist Flow Diagram
STROBE	Full Record Checklist
PRISMA	Full Record Checklist Flow Diagram
STARD	Full Record Checklist Flow Diagram
COREQ	Full Record
ENTREQ	Full Record
SQUIRE	Full Record Checklist
CHEERS	Full Record Checklist
CARE	Full Record Checklist
SAMPL	Full Record



Toolkits

The EQUATOR Network works to improve the reliability and value of medical research literature by promoting transparent and accurate reporting of research studies.

Our Toolkits support different user groups, including:

Authors
Information and resources for authors

EQUATOR highlights

16/04/2014 - The STROBE Statement webinar recording now available

The recording of the EQUATOR – PAHO March 2014 webinar on the STROBE Statement [Read More](#)

17/03/2014 - Scientific meeting and the EQUATOR Annual Lecture 2014, 16 May 2014, Paris, France

The INSERM-Sorbonne Paris Cite Epidemiology and Statistics Research Centre in collaboration with the EQUATOR Network will be hosting a one-day scientific meeting: "Improving reporting to decrease the waste of research". The aim of the meeting is to bring important issues ... [Read More](#)

News

EQUATOR Network Newsletter April 2014
25/04/2014

Implementation of reporting guidelines in journals: Wolters Kluwer experience
15/04/2014

Collaborative initiative involving 28 rehabilitation and disability journals
9/04/2014

Videos from Lancet/NIHR "Waste in Research" symposium available online
8/04/2014

Authorship problems

- Real authors omitted
 - Error? Mistake? Fraud?
- Which author first?
- Which author do you deal with?
 - Does the corresponding author (really) represent all authors?
- Disagreement over submitted version
 - Disagreement over corrections/changes

Ghost or guest?

- Ghosts = write but are not acknowledged
 - Articles written by professional authors on behalf of (pharmaceutical) companies
- Guests = don't write, but are listed
 - (author celebrity to give article kudos)
- Gift authors = don't write, but are listed
 - (head of department, etc.)



Authorship criteria

- ICMJE definition
 - “An “author” is generally considered to be someone who has made substantive intellectual contributions to a published study”
 - i.e. contributed to the idea AND execution AND writing of the study
- *“All contributors who do not meet the criteria for authorship should be listed in an acknowledgments section. Examples of those who might be acknowledged include a person who provided purely technical help, writing assistance, or a department chair who provided only general support.”*

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Authors or contributors?

- Increasing move to “who did what”
- Authors listed at start of paper
- Contributors (authors+) listed at the end, with their contribution

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Authorship & contributorship

Authorship

The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals (ICMJE Recommendations 2013) recommend that authorship be based on the following 4 criteria:

- Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; AND
- Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND
- Final approval of the version to be published; AND
- Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

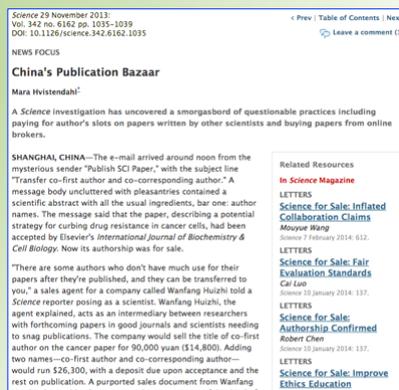
In addition to being accountable for the parts of the work he or she has done, an author should be able to identify which co-authors are responsible for specific other parts of the work. In addition, authors should have confidence in the integrity of the contributions of their co-authors.

All those designated as authors should meet all four criteria for authorship, and all who meet the four criteria should be identified as authors. These authorship criteria are intended to reserve the status of authorship for those who deserve credit and can take responsibility for the work. The criteria are not intended for use as a means to disqualify colleagues from authorship who otherwise meet authorship criteria by denying them the opportunity to meet criterion #s 2 or 3. Therefore, all individuals who meet the first criterion should have the opportunity to participate in the review, drafting, and final approval of the manuscript.

Changes to author lists

- Who approves these?
 - All authors – not just the corresponding author

- Fraudulent author practices
 - Adding authors for a fee
 - Routinely ignoring post-doc (or other junior) contribution



Plagiarism What – exactly – is plagiarism?

- **Plagiarism** is using someone else's work without giving proper credit - a failure to cite adequately.
- **Copyright infringement** is using someone else's creative work without authorization or compensation, if compensation is appropriate.

- Schools (academia, institutions) enforce plagiarism
- The courts enforce copyright infringement

<http://www.plagiarismchecker.com/plagiarism-vs-copyright.php>

Copyright and plagiarism

- Copyright infringement occurs when someone uses another person's materials without permission
- Plagiarism occurs when someone else's materials are used without attribution

- There is overlap between copyright and plagiarism
 - It is hard to plagiarise without some level of copyright infringement

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Levels of plagiarism

- Full text copy
 - Someone else's article
 - Author's own article (self-plagiarism)
- Partial copy
 - Parts from one other article
 - Parts from many articles
- Translation
 - Own or other's article

- ... Without citation!



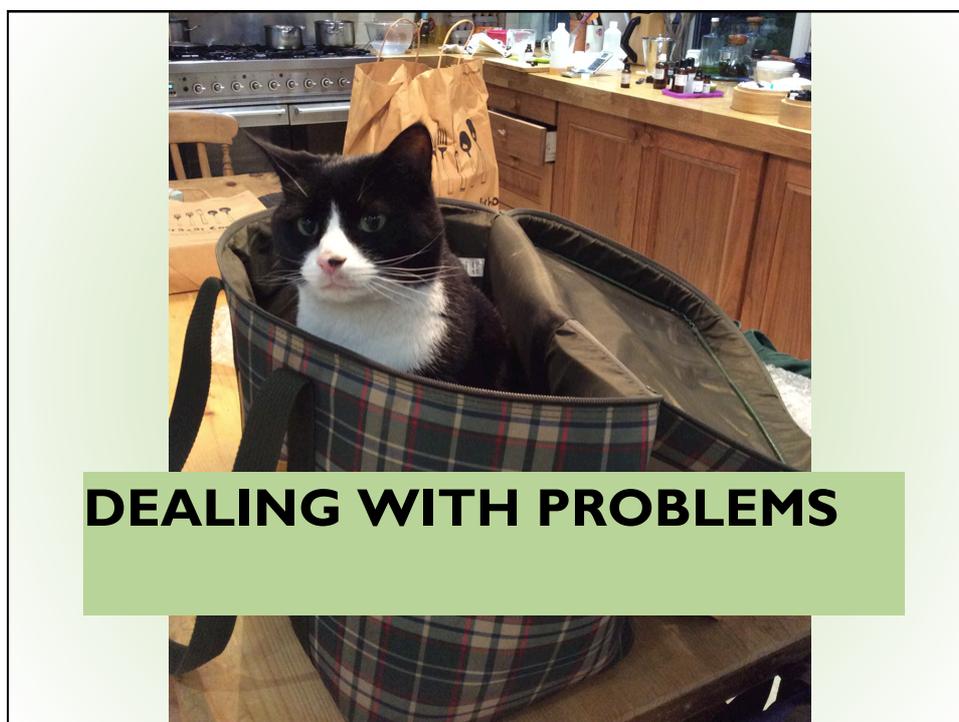
Why plagiarism happens

- Laziness
 - Authors do not bother to re-create their own work when they find it already written elsewhere
- Deceit
 - Authors want to get credit for something they did not write
- Misguided respect
 - Authors feel that they cannot write something better

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Conflict of interest

- Funding
 - Who paid?
- Relationships
 - “I am married to the editor”
 - Chaos, Solitons & Fractals
 - 60 articles by the editor during 2008
- Remember: COI also applies to editors
 - And reviewers
 - And publishers/owners



Journal policies

- Set policies
- Publicise them

...e.g....

- What you expect from authors
- What happens during your publishing process
- How you deal with problems
 - How you anticipate and avoid problems

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Other aspects of transparency

Please click on the links to find these policies:

- [competing interests](#)
- [ethics approval of research](#)
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Responding to problems

- Everyone will want you to do something NOW
 - Stop and think
 - Send holding emails
 - Don't ignore it
- Investigate
 - Follow COPE guidelines (if available)
- Be certain of facts before action

- The problem may be minor
- The problem may not be yours to solve!



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Committee on Publication Ethics

<http://publicationethics.org>



Erratum and corrections

- Link to/from the original article
 - These are not always picked up on PubMed Central
 - CrossMark (from CrossRef) to indicate changes, and any supplementary material
- Change the original article?
 - May be more helpful to the readers
 - Clearly signpost what has been changed and when

Retractions

- Ensure you have conclusive evidence to support your decision
 - And your evidence is in writing, and any investigation is completed
- All authors should be contacted
 - If required, the authors' institutions should be informed
- A reason for the retraction should be published
 - And agreed with the authors
 - It should include the word "Retraction" before the article title

Participate

- Join editorial associations
 - European Association of Science Editors (EASE)
 - www.ease.org.uk
- Join publishing associations
 - Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers (ALPSP)
 - www.alpssp.org
- Stay aware of what is happening
 - Blogs: Scholarly Kitchen, RetractionWatch
 - Journals: Learned Publishing, European Science Editing
 - ListSers: LibLicence, GOAL

"Bad" journals

- It takes time to build a good reputation
 - Bad reputations are hard to dispel
 - Beall's list of predatory journals
- There are a lot of naive authors and readers
 - Bad quality published research doesn't go away
 - Spinach and Popeye ...
- Editors and publishers have a duty of care
- Set your standards high
 - Be highly ethical – it will reward you!

