Overview

- Principles and guidelines followed by editors
- Role and responsibilities of editors
- Practical aspects
  - Prevention, detection and enforcement
  - Challenges
  - Successes
  - Case history
  - How to promote research integrity?

Principles

- Maintain editorial independence
- Avoid commercial influence of academic content
- Promote transparency (don't hide anything!)
  - Conflicts of interest
  - Funding sources
  - Professional assistance with writing/editing
**Guidelines – journal processes**

- Publish journal policies on integrity
  - Encourage authors to follow best practice
  - Encourage peer reviewers to follow best practice
  - Raise awareness of negative consequences of misconduct

- Publish instructions on how to make a complaint to journal about its own procedures

- Detect, avert and respond to
  - Plagiarism
  - Fraud, e.g. fabrication, falsification
  - Redundant publication

**Published guidelines**

- COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics)
  www.publicationethics.org

- ICMJE (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors)
  www.icmje.org

- GPP (Good Publication Practice, for pharmaceutical companies)
  www.gpp-guidelines.org

- WAME (World Association of Medical Editors)
  www.wame.org

- CSE (Council of Science Editors, USA)
  www.councilscienceeditors.org

- Publishers’ own guidelines
  (e.g. Wiley-Blackwell, www.blackwellpublishing.com/publicationethics)

**Published guidelines (cont’d)**

- EASE Science Editors’ Handbook
  - 1.4.1: The ethics of scientific publication, by Poul Røn
  - 1.4.2: How to be prepared for fraud, by Stephen Lock
  - 1.4.3: How should fraud be dealt with, by Poul Røn
  - 1.4.4: Conflict of interest: declaring more or less, by Hervé Maisonneuve
  - 1.4.5: Editors and the biomedical industry, by Liz Wager
  www.ease.org.uk/handbook/index.shtml

- WMA (World Medical Association) Declaration of Helsinki
  www.wma.net/e/policy/b3

- EMWA (European Medical Writers Association)
  www.emwa.org

- AMWA (American Medical Writers Association)
  www.amwa.org
Editors
- Editor-in-Chief & Editorial Board
- Editorial staff, e.g., copyeditor, managing editor
- Editors’ roles vary among journals

Role and responsibilities
- Publisher must define journal policies
- Notify Editor-in-Chief of research integrity issues
- Editor-in-Chief to follow guidelines/principles
- Journal’s policies control the Editor-in-Chief’s remit

Practical aspects – prevention
Editors have many powers...
- Publish clear guidelines to prevent misconduct:
  - Ensure author is aware of best practice
  - Do authors have time & inclination to read/follow guidance?
  - Pressure to publish - authors might breach guidelines anyway
  - EASE statement on inappropriate use of impact factors
  - Give full, clear guidance to reviewers
  - Do reviewers have time to read/follow guidance?
  - Control who is on the Editorial Board
    - e.g., Subject-specific Editorial Board members, statistician

Practical aspects – detection
Challenges
- Detecting plagiarism
  - Cost & effectiveness of tools to detect plagiarism (e.g., CrossCheck)
  - Cost of editorial staff’s time
- Reviewers have little time and are not paid
- Difficult to detect fraud or undeclared conflict of interest
Practical aspects – enforcement

Responding to poor research integrity
- First, seek response from author
- Publish corrections
- Retract published paper if necessary
- Journal may ban submissions from offending authors
- Editors cannot usually carry out investigations themselves
- Therefore, notify authorities or author’s employer if appropriate

Practical aspects – enforcement

Challenges
- Tactful discussion with author
- Avoid unnecessary damage to the author’s career

Practical aspects – successes

- Online submission and peer-review systems
  - Authors must make declarations before submission
    - e.g. conflict of interest, financial support, professional writing/editorial support, author/contributor roles
- Transparency is improving
  - Conflicts of interest
  - Funding sources
  - Paid editorial assistance (including ghost writing)
Practical aspects – successes (cont’d)

- Software for detecting plagiarism/image manipulation is available...but remains costly and time-consuming.
- Clinical trials must be registered.
- Can search by registration number in online PubMed database (spot duplicates).
- Ethics guidelines are becoming more comprehensive.
- Valuable resources for editors, reviewers and authors.
- Aid to development of journals’ own guidelines.
- Clearer guidance for editors on dealing with misconduct.

*Guidance on acceptable image manipulation:

Case history - fraud

- Co-workers reported to Oikos editorial office that data published by Møller were “invented”
- Oikos had data checked by a statistician:
  - Concluded: fraud
- Oikos requested that the authors retract the publication; they agreed (after arguing)
- Retraction published

Retraction published


In this article we reported data on size and (absolute and relative) asymmetry of stone oak (Quercus rotundifolia) leaves from Spain. It now appears that the measurements and analyses behind the data in the article were flawed and misinterpreted, implicating that the conclusions drawn are invalid. We therefore retract the article.

A. P. Møller, F. de Lope
Published in Oikos 92: 558 (2001)
How to promote research integrity?

- Promote awareness of existing guidelines
- Develop guidelines for other (non-medical) areas of scientific research?
- Encourage collaboration among professional groups that produce guidelines
  - Aim for consensus
- Notify journal editors when bad practice is suspected
  - In peer review process
  - In submitted manuscripts
  - In published papers

Interested to learn more?

EASE Conference
Integrity in Science Communication
Pisa, Italy
16-19 September 2009

www.ease.org.uk
Programme Committee: Professor Arjan Polderman (Chair)
a.k.s.polderman@pw.nl

Summary

In summary...

- Many sources of support are available to editors, authors & reviewers
- Editors' role: prevention, detection & enforcement
  - Publish journal policies & provide clear guidance to authors & reviewers
  - Assign appropriate peer reviewers
  - Use tools to detect plagiarism, image manipulation & redundant publication
  - Use online manuscript submission/peer review systems to aid enforcement
  - Respond to poor research integrity (author/employer; correction/retraction)
- The way forward
  - Promote awareness of guidelines
  - Notify editors of suspected bad practice
  - Encourage development of international guidelines...consensus
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