

# Excellence in ethics

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Editor, *The Lancet Global Health*

November, 2015

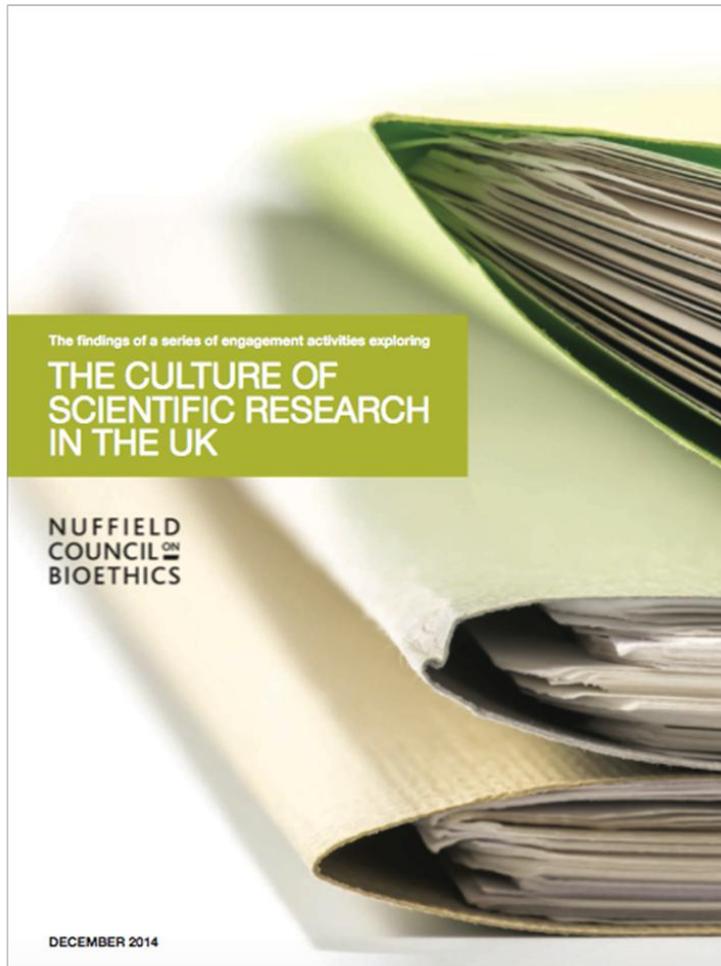
# Why publish?

**We all want literature we can trust**

**But there are sometimes conflicting priorities...**

- Readers (public & professional): authoritative information
- Editors: to publish “good” papers
- Journalists: to get a story
- Authors: to get published, funded, and promoted
- Institutions: to attract high-calibre faculty

# Culture of scientific research



- Online survey, 970 responses
- 15 discussion events with universities around UK
- Evidence-gathering meetings with funding bodies, publishers and editors of scientific research, and academics from social

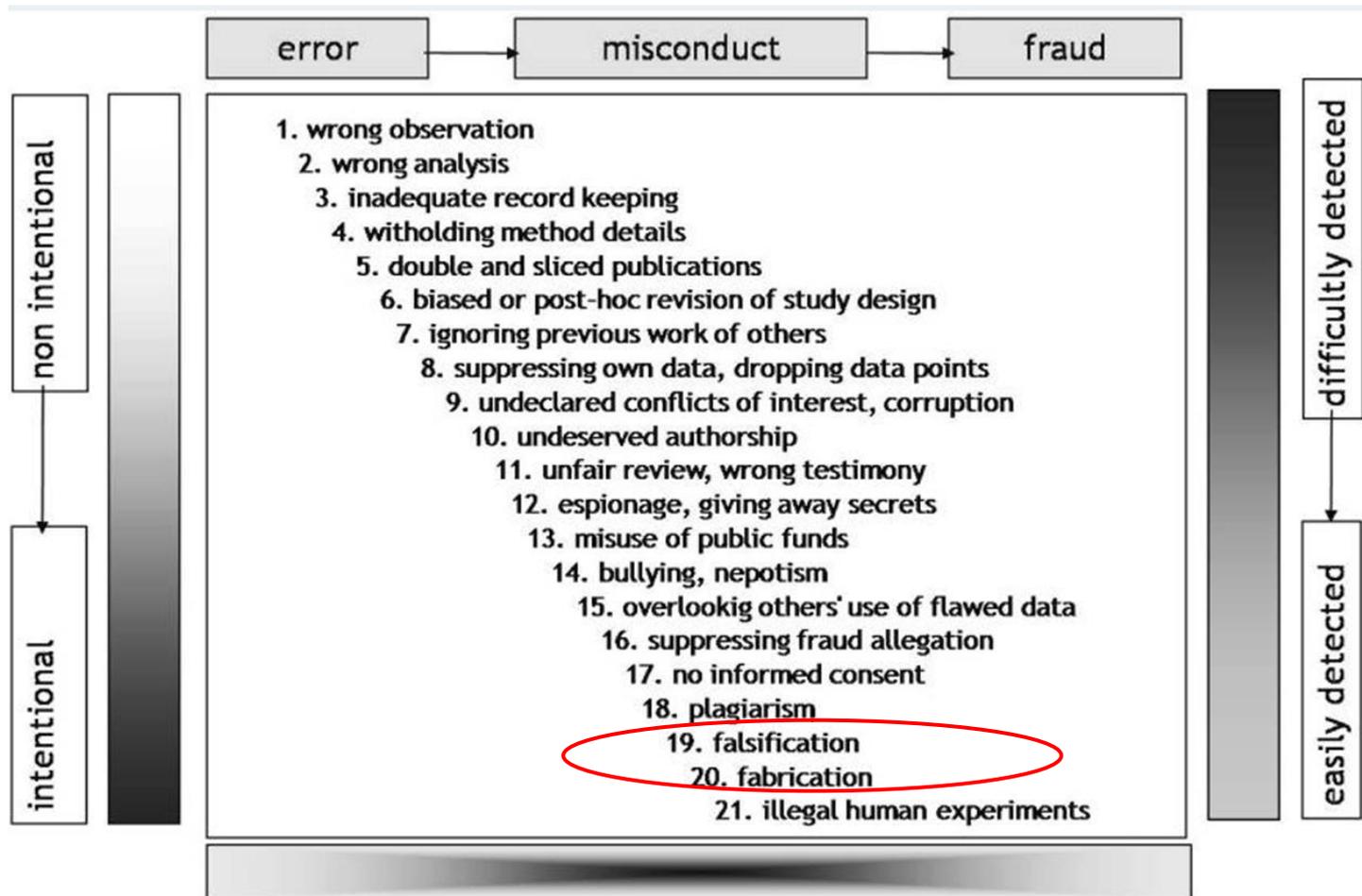
## Pressure to publish

“...publishing in high impact factor journals is still thought to be the most important element in determining whether researchers gain funding, jobs and promotions, along with article-level metrics such as citation numbers. This has created a strong pressure on scientists not only to ‘publish or perish’, but to publish in particular journals.”

## Pressure to publish

- **58%** aware of others feeling tempted or under pressure to compromise on research integrity and standards; **26%** themselves felt tempted
- **38%** think 'pressure to publish' can encourage fabrication, altering, omitting, or manipulating data
- **31%** think researchers rushing to publish results may not conduct appropriate replications and scrutiny of their work

# The staircase of misconduct



Marcovitch et al.  
*Croat Med J* 2010;  
**51**: 7–15

# Fabricated/falsified data

- Fabrication: invention of data
- Falsification: manipulation of real data – eg, omission of “inconvenient” findings, alteration of images

# Fabricated/falsified data - consequences

**RETRACTION**

doi:10.1038/nature13599

## Retraction: Bidirectional developmental potential in reprogrammed pluripotency

Haruko Obokata, Yoshiki S  
Mitsutaka Kadota, Munaza  
Mikiko Tokoro, Yukari Teru  
Charles A. Vacanti & Teruh

*Nature* **505**, 676–680 (2014);

Several critical errors have been  
10.1038/nature12968) and Let  
tion by the RIKEN Institute. T  
categorized some of the errors a

**RETRACTION**

doi:10.1038/nature13598

## Retraction: Stimulus-triggered fate conversion of somatic cells into pluripotency

Wakayama, **Yoshiki Sasai**,  
nti, Hitoshi Niwa, Masayuki Yamato

doi:10.1038/nature12968

n found in our Article and Letter (<http://69>), which led to an in-depth investiga-  
The RIKEN investigation committee has  
is misconduct (see Supplementary Data 1  
Additional errors identified by the authors

## Stem cell scientist found dead in apparent suicide

By Jonathan Webb  
Science reporter, BBC News

5 August 2014 | Science & Environment





# Plagiarism - consequences

## Editors' Note: Retraction Notice

It has come to our attention that an article by Aliyev and Aliyev<sup>1</sup> reproduces extensive wording from an article by Medford et al<sup>2</sup> without using quotation marks to identify that many of the words were not those of the authors who submitted the article to us.

On the basis of the guidelines of the Committee on Publication Ethics,<sup>3</sup> this falls into the category of plagiarism. We have followed the Committee on Publication Ethics retraction guidelines when plagiarism of a published article is suspected.

As a consequence, we are retracting the following article:

Aliyev NA, Aliyev ZN. Lamotrigine in the immediate treatment of outpatients with depersonalization disorder without psychiatric comorbidity. Randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study. *J Clin Psychopharmacol*. 2011;31:61-65.<sup>1</sup>

We want to take this opportunity to alert our readers that it is not ethical to use a word-for-word paragraph or a series of sentences from the work of others without using quotation marks and citing the article quoted in the references. It is not sufficient to simply cite the primary article.

Richard I. Shader, MD  
David J. Greenblatt, MD  
The Editors-in-Chief  
*Journal of Clinical Psychopharmacology*

### REFERENCES

1. Aliyev NA, Aliyev ZN. Lamotrigine in the immediate treatment of outpatients with depersonalization disorder without psychiatric comorbidity. Randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study. *J Clin Psychopharmacol*. 2011;31:61-65.
2. Medford N, Sierra M, Baker D, David AS. Understanding and treating depersonalization disorder. *Adv Psychiatr Treat*. 2005;11:92-100.
3. Committee on Publication Ethics. Guidelines. Available at: <http://publicationethics.org/resources/guidelines>. Accessed January 3, 2014.

# Conflicts of interest

Potential for professional judgment on a **primary** interest (such as validity of research) to be influenced by a **secondary** interest (such as financial gain, personal relationships or rivalries, academic competition, or intellectual beliefs)

Reprint

From the MMR investigation

  
THE SUNDAY TIMES

## MMR doctor given legal aid thousands

The Sunday Times, December 31 2006  
Brian Deer

ANDREW WAKEFIELD, the former surgeon whose campaign linking the MMR vaccine with autism caused a collapse in immunisation rates, was paid more than £400,000 by lawyers trying to prove that the vaccine was unsafe.

The payments, unearthed by The Sunday Times, were part of £3.4m distributed from the legal aid fund to doctors and scientists who had been recruited to support a now failed lawsuit against vaccine manufacturers.

Critics this weekend voiced amazement at the sums, which they said created a clear conflict of interest and were the "financial engine" behind a worldwide alarm over the triple measles, mumps and rubella shot.

# Duplicate publication, text recycling

- Publication of all (or a substantial part of) a piece of work more than once (in the same or another language) without adequate cross-referencing or justification
- Not considered as serious as plagiarism (indeed considered fine by some) but has potential to distort publication record (eg, meta-analyses)
- Has potential copyright ramifications

# Duplicate publication - consequences

## Retraction Watch

Tracking retractions as a w

### U. Illinois chancellor earns mega-correction for duplicate publication

with 49 comments

[Phyllis Wise](#), the chancellor of the University of Illinois and an obstetrics researcher, has called for a massive correction of a 2006 paper in *Neuroscience* for work she appears to have tried to pass off as having been previously unpublished — but which wasn't.

The article, "Estrogen therapy: Does it help or hurt the adult and aging brain? Insights derived from animal models," has been cited 47 times, according to Thomson Scientific's Web of Knowledge.

And it had caught also the attention of readers on [PubPeer](#), who noted that:



This paper (Neuro06) is a duplicate publication, presenting as new results already published in the paper (Endo01):

Neuroprotective Effects of Estradiol in Middle-Aged Female Rats, Dena B. Dubal, Phyllis M. Wise, *Endocrinology* Volume 142 Issue 1 pp43-48 (2001)

<http://press.endocrine.org/doi/abs/10.1210/endo.142.1.7911>

It includes self-plagiarism, the misuse of images and the removal of co-authors, as well as the presentation of recycled scientific results in a manner that raises questions as to their veracity. In detail:



Phyllis Wise, via University of Illinois

# Peer review misconduct

- Use of confidential information for reviewer's own benefit (eg, plagiarising text, stealing data or ideas)
- Submission of biased review in the hope of preventing or delaying publication by a rival
- Failure to declare competing interests
- Fake peer review: author recommends a known reviewer, providing a false email address which he/she administers; **author essentially reviews own paper**

# Peer review misconduct - consequences

## Retraction Watch

Tracking retractions as a

### 17 retractions from SAGE journals bring total fake peer review count to 250

without comments

On Monday, we reported on [64 new retractions from Springer journals](#) resulting from fake peer reviews. Yesterday, SAGE — which [retracted 60 papers for the same reason just over a year ago](#) — added 17 additional retractions to their list.



The articles were published in five different journals, and one retraction involved authorship fraud in addition to peer review fraud, according to a SAGE spokesperson:



In all 17 cases, our investigation found the peer review processes had been severely compromised by fake reviewer details that were supplied to manipulate the peer review process.

The investigations and subsequent retractions are a reflection of improved processes and guidance provided by SAGE to editors and peer review assistants that SAGE further enhanced following a group of retractions in 2014. Today's retractions are historical in nature and reflect SAGE's efforts to uncover instances of fraud that predate the new process.

# Conclusions

- Pressure to publish is real but should be resisted
- Journals are part of the problem!
- Focus on rigour, relevance, and responsibility (to patients, communities, policy makers)
- Ethical conduct is not optional!
- The consequences can ruin careers and potentially harm patients

# Recommendations

“Researchers [should] actively contribute to the adoption of relevant codes of ethical conduct and standards for high quality research... and engage with funders, publishers and learned societies to maintain a two-way dialogue and contribute to policy-making.”

*Nuffield Council on Bioethics. The culture of scientific research in the UK. December, 2014.*