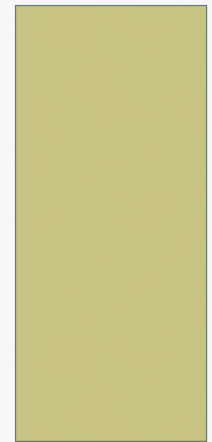


WHO REVIEWS THE REVIEWERS?

ETHICS IN PEER REVIEW



PRESENTER: KRISTEN OVERSTREET

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ETHICAL ISSUES IN PEER REVIEW

- Fake Reviewers
- Conflict of Interest
- Lack of Expertise
- Lack of Transparency

WHO REVIEWS THE REVIEWERS?

- Editorial Office Staff
 - Managing Editors / Peer Review Managers
 - Editorial Assistants
- Editors
 - Editor-in-Chief
 - Associate Editors
- Publishers / Societies
 - Ethics Committees
 - Publication Committees

HOW CAN WE RESOLVE THE ISSUES?

- Awareness
- Vigilance
- Education
- Policies

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Fake Reviewers
 - Vigilance
 - Non-institutional address can be a red flag.
 - Policy Options
 - Do not use author-suggested reviewers
 - Use author-suggested reviewers but perform Internet search to verify provided info.
 - Use only 1 author-suggested reviewer and at least 1 editor-identified reviewer

Retraction Watch

Tracking retractions as a w

Search Results

Publisher discovers 50 manuscripts involving fake peer reviewers

with 26 comments

BioMed Central has uncovered about fifty manuscripts in their editorial system that involved fake peer reviewers, Retraction Watch has learned.



Most of the cases were not published because they were discovered by a manuscript editor on a final pre-publication check. The five or so that have been published will go through some sort of re-review, which may result in expressions of concern or retraction.

The narrative seems similar to that in the growing number of cases of [peer review manipulation](#) we've seen recently. What tipped off the editor was minor spelling mistakes in the reviewers' names, and odd non-institutional email addresses that were often changed once reviews had been submitted, in an apparent attempt to cover the fakers' tracks. Those "reviewers" had turned in reports across several journals, spanning several subjects.

It would seem that a third party, perhaps marketing services helping authors have papers accepted, was involved.

The publisher has let all of its external editors in chief know about the situation. To prevent it from happening again, authors will not be able to recommend reviewers for their papers. Here's a message from BioMed Central senior managing editor Diana Marshall that went out to a number of journal editors earlier today: [Read the rest of this entry »](#)

Examples from Retraction Watch

Three more papers felled by suspected fake reviews

with 6 comments

So far, we've counted more than 300 papers that have been retracted after editors [suspected the peer-review process had been compromised](#) — and we're adding three more



and *Preservation* became suspicious of the three authors from supposedly different reviewers. When they contacted the reviewers, they pulled the papers.

The reviewers' identities were fabricated entirely (as opposed

Biology journal bans plagiarizers, reviewers with non-institutional email addresses

with 39 comments

DNA and Cell Biology has declared it will ban any authors who submit plagiarized manuscripts for three years, and will no longer accept suggestions of reviewers with non-institutional email addresses.



The move comes after a wave of hundreds of retractions stemming from fake peer reviews, often occurring when [authors supply fake emails for suggested reviewers](#).

In an [editorial](#) published online October 23, editor [Caro Reiss](#) notes that the decision to ban authors who plagiarize from a rash of recent submissions containing overlapping email addresses [of this entry](#) »

Seven papers flagged earlier for fake reviews now retracted by Elsevier

with 2 comments

Elsevier has now retracted the seven papers it [flagged in October](#) as being affected by fake peer reviews.



flagged a total of about 300 retractions for [fake peer review](#) process becomes compromised — for instance, authors appear to have created fake email accounts in violation of light to their own papers.

of the recently retracted papers:

Share this:

WHAT'S HOT AND COOL IN SCIENTIFIC PUBLISHING

AUTHORITY, AUTHORS, CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS, ECONOMICS, ETHICS, PEER REVIEW, RESEARCH, SOCIAL ROLE

Trust But Verify — Identity Fraud and Exploitation of the Trust Economy in Scholarly Publishing

POSTED BY KENT ANDERSON · JUL 14, 2014 · 21 COMMENTS

FILED UNDER ACADEMIC PUBLISHING, CONTROL, JOURNAL OF VIBRATION AND CONTROL, JVC, ORCID, PEER REVIEW, PETER CHEN, RETRACTION WATCH, SAGE

The misbehavior of authors — one of the most intractable problems in scientific and scholarly publishing — reared its ugly head again last week, as [SAGE](#) revealed that it was retracting 60 papers after it detected a possible peer-review and citation ring built



Scholarly Kitchen post

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Conflicts of Interest (COI)
 - Vigilance
 - What does your system flag for you and what does it not?
 - Policy Options
 - Ask potential reviewers in your review invitation letter to alert the editor of any COI.
 - In your Reviewer Instructions, provide examples of what your journal considers to be COI (eg, similar research in progress / competing grants, at same institution, relationship with author(s)).
 - Provide COI policy with your Author Instructions

EXAMPLES & RESOURCES

- “The COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers set out the basic principles and standards to which all peer reviewers should adhere during the peer-review process.”



COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers

Irene Hames on behalf of COPE Council
March 2013, v.1

RECOMMENDATIONS

- From COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers

(available at

http://publicationethics.org/files/Peer%20review%20guidelines_0.pdf)

- declare any potentially conflicting or competing interests (which may, for example, be personal, financial, intellectual, professional, political or religious), seeking advice from the journal if they are unsure whether something constitutes a relevant interest.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- From COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers

(available at

http://publicationethics.org/files/Peer%20review%20guidelines_0.pdf)

- follow journals' policies on situations they consider to represent a conflict to reviewing. If no guidance is provided, they should inform the journal if: they work at the same institution as any of the authors (or will be joining that institution or are applying for a job there); they are or have been recent (e.g. within the past 3 years) mentors, mentees, close collaborators or joint grant holders; they have a close personal relationship with any of the authors.
-
- notify the journal immediately and seek advice if they discover either a conflicting interest that wasn't apparent when they agreed to the review or anything that might prevent them providing a fair and unbiased review.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Lacking Expertise
 - Vigilance
 - How do you know a reviewer's level of expertise on the manuscript topic?
 - Policy Options
 - Perform an Internet search on the potential reviewers to see what they have published on the topic and/or what their research / academic / clinical focus is at their institutions.
 - Ask reviewers in the review invitation letter to decline the invitation if they are not qualified to perform the review

- only agree to review manuscripts for which they have the subject expertise required to carry out a proper assessment and which they can assess in a timely manner

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Lack of Transparency
 - Vigilance
 - Transparency is key for the peer review process to maintain credibility.
 - Policy Options
 - Require reviewers to disclose if they have involved anyone else in the review of the manuscript. Provide reviewers with clear information on whether your journal allows others to participate in the review, or review in place of the invited reviewer (eg, query editor/editorial office, provide names of others who participated in the review).
 - Prohibit editors from performing an anonymous review for a manuscript they are handling.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Lack of Transparency *continued*
- not involve anyone else in the review of a manuscript, including junior researchers they are mentoring, without first obtaining permission from the journal; the names of any individuals who have helped them with the review should be included with the returned review so that they are associated with the manuscript in the journal's records and can also receive due credit for their efforts.
- if they are the editor handling a manuscript and decide themselves to provide a review of that manuscript, do this transparently and not under the guise of an anonymous review if the journal operates blind review; providing a review for a manuscript being handled by another editor at the journal can be treated as any other review.

AWARENESS & EDUCATION

- Send those who review the reviewers to COPE and other industry meetings (eg ISMTE) so they can become aware of the issues and obtain education for managing them.
- Those who assign and invite reviewers, as well as review the reviewers' comments on the manuscripts, are in particular need of awareness and education.

AWARENESS & EDUCATION

- Resources for Awareness
 - COPE monthly newsletter
 - ISMTE and CSE discussion forums
 - Retraction Watch
 - Scholarly Kitchen blog
 - Publishers' Blogs and Newsletters
 - and others . . .

ETHICS IN PEER REVIEW

- Conclusions
 - Those who review the reviewers need to be aware, vigilant, educated, and to have policies they can use to manage the ethical issues that arise during the peer review process.
 - Those who review the reviewers are integral to a credible, high quality peer review process.
 - In our current culture, editorial office budgets are being cut further and further, which is particularly troublesome in regard to ethics; it can not be allowed to affect the knowledge, time, and intent to ensure ethical peer review.

NIGHTMARE FODDER

- Despite the best efforts of those who review reviewers, ethical issues can go unnoticed.



 BRITISH PHARMACOLOGICAL SOCIETY **BJCP** British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology

Editorial

Organised crime against the academic peer review system 

Adam Cohen^{1,*}, Smita Pattanaik², Praveen Kumar³, Robert R. Bies⁴, Anthonius de Boer⁵, Albert Ferro⁶, Annette Gilchrist⁷, Geoffrey K. Isbister⁸, Sarah Ross⁹ and Andrew J. Webb¹⁰ **Issue**

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British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology
Volume 81, Issue 6, pages 1012–1017, June 2016

 score 391

BEST EFFORTS *CONTINUED*

- “The Senior Editor and the Executive Editor missed the totally inadequate quality of the reviews (box 2), the style of English, which was fairly unusual for two highly ranked professors of medicine in Ivy League US universities, and the suspiciously rapid response. Also the fact that they did not have an institutional e-mail address should have raised suspicion. We wrote to the referees and one of them denied all knowledge of this report. The second referee could not be traced. We then realised this was a case of peer review fraud [3].”

Paras 9-10

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/bcp.12992/full>

BEST EFFORTS *CONTINUED*

- “There is no doubt that our experienced Editors missed several fairly obvious clues that should have set alarm bells ringing. We are embarrassed by this but we also have to realise that the editorial and peer review system is not designed to withstand fraudulent activities by a commercial criminal organisation blatantly abusing the trust that is the basis of our peer review system.” Para 14

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/bcp.12992/full>

BEST EFFORTS *CONTINUED*

"We also are convinced that policing is not the job of journal Editors" para 17

"Whenever things go wrong, there is a strong urge to take action, especially to prevent whatever went wrong happening again. Such steps, however, will generally make life harder for the majority of people being entirely honest, and generally do not prevent further misconduct. One only has to visit an airport to experience this." Para 16

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/bcp.12992/full>