

COPE in Montreal, Canada, May 2013

Montreal was host to two major conferences on research and publication ethics in the beginning of May 2013: The annual meeting of the Council of Science Editors (CSE) and the 3rd World Conference on Research Integrity (WCRI). Representatives from COPE participated in and helped organize both conferences. In addition, Charlotte Haug, Vice-chair of COPE, and Rosemary Shinkai, COPE Council, took part in a joint meeting between COPE and ICSU (International Council for Science) (<http://www.icsu.org>).

Council of Science Editors (CSE)

More than 350 editors participated in this year's annual meeting of CSE: "Communicate Science Effectively: The world depends On It!".

The keynote address on the opening day was by Jeffrey M Drazen, editor-in-chief of the *New England Journal*, who spoke about "Two hundred years of communicating the medical news". He traced the history of the medical event reporting over the 200 years of the *New England Journal of Medicine's* existence, including a lot of historical highlights, and outlined how the style of reporting has changed over these 200 years.

The plenary address on the second day was by Andrew Revkin, an American non-fiction science and environmental writer. In his talk "The new science communication climate", he discussed whether the path from research laboratory to journal to the public and policymakers has become a very rough one—with disinformation and misinformation often drowning out the science. His talk explored issues and opportunities, such as how conventional science journalism shrinks, while other means of exploring science online explosively grow.

CSE and COPE held a joint session on "The life of a retraction" with speakers:

- Diane Scott-Lichter, Publisher, American Association for Cancer Research
- Abraham Fuks, McGill University Research Integrity Officer
- Ivan Oransky, Executive Editor, Reuters Health, Co-founder, Retraction Watch
- Charlotte Haug, Vice chair of COPE.

The session was well attended, and was a great opportunity to highlight COPE's retraction guidelines as well as showing some of the complexities in real life COPE Forum cases.

Among the many other sessions, one called "The East–West divide: challenges facing Eastern authors" with speakers Donald Samulack, Boyana Konforti and Phillippa J Benson was particularly interesting. The session focused on bridging East and West by bringing in perspectives from authors in the East, tying them in with those of journal editors in the West, and then highlighting gaps and recommending improvements. The results of two surveys was discussed: one showing challenges Eastern authors face in getting published in Western journals and a parallel survey showing problems Western journal editors

perceive in submissions from the East. Interestingly, there was a huge gap between what authors and editors perceived as problems, especially in the area of publication ethics.

3rd World Conference on Research Integrity (WCRI)

In contrast with the CSE meeting, the WCRI is not primarily for editors. Approximately 20 of the 450 delegates were editors/publishers. Most of the delegates represented universities, research ethics committees, funders of research, international research organizations, etc. The interests of the delegates were naturally reflected in the themes of the 30 sessions, and only four specifically related to publications (authorship, plagiarism, journal policies and retractions). In addition, former COPE chair and vice-chair Liz Wager and Sabine Kleinert organized a workshop/"focus track session" on "How should institutions and journals work together in cases of misconduct?" This workshop was well attended and there was a lively and constructive discussion on how communication between journals and the author's institution ideally should be. Liz Wager is responsible for drafting a document summarizing the discussions together with those of us who participated. This document has the potential to become a more detailed add-on to the COPE guidelines.

Even with relatively few people from journals attending, there was considerable interest in COPE. Firstly because all researchers are interested in publications and everyone it seems has had some bad experiences when they have tried to publish their own work and want to talk about it! Secondly, people seem to like the way we work in COPE—in an area (research integrity and ethics) where there are many theoretical and philosophical discussions, COPE's practical and pragmatic approach and experience seem to be appealing to many. At the same time, it is necessary to repeatedly underline what we can and cannot do—and for whom.