

Summing up

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Where do we go from here?

Those of us who have worked on the Guidelines feel very strongly that they should not be cut in stone, that they will be updated on a regular basis, and that they will evolve and change with time and experience.

We also need to consider: What is the future of COPE? By correspondence would like to try and gauge your interest in this organisation and at what level you might like to continue to relate to it. Do you think COPE should be an organisation with individual membership (editors), or is it an organisation that should be primarily journal driven—should our journals form the membership of COPE so that we ensure continuity regardless of who is editor?

I believe we have influenced the General Medical Council and the Royal College of Physicians in the way in which they're now approaching this problem. So I think COPE has helped the process. We should continue to stress the importance of the entire spectrum of research misconduct and not just research fraud. We should also promote further debate on the desirability of creating an independent agency to deal with research misconduct.

Endorsement of the guidelines

By September, it would be good if we could have a large proportion of UK editors of our medical journals supporting the guidelines. It would show that we as a group are going to continue to push ethics in publication. I think that will bring increasing pressure to bear on the GMC and other bodies.

We should not pretend that these guidelines are a final word.

Finally, in order to make this meeting happen we had to build a database of British biomedical journal editors. This will greatly facilitate communication in the future, and, I hope, will allow us to act together in the development of COPE and the *Guidelines on Good Publication Practice*.

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