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Name of Journal: *World Journal of Critical Care Medicine*

ESPS Manuscript NO: 24735

Manuscript Type: Review

RESPONSES TO REVIEWERS

Reviewer 1

Comments:

I am glad having the opportunity of reviewing the manuscript 24735, 'Ethical Publishing in Intensive Care Medicine: A Narrative Review'. The paper is very interesting. However, I believe that minor alterations and improvements are needed before the paper is suitable for publication. Of 48 retracted publications, almost half of them (22) were Fujii's and Boldt's papers. I believe it would be nice either to shorten the text about Fujii and Boldt as examples or either extend the examples to other writers with also retracted publications. Your references should be corrected (No. 5 and 17 are the same) and minor language polishing is needed.

Responses:

As the manuscript's length is already extensive, I prefer to shorten the text. Following sentences were removed (given in red) to follow one of the reviewer's alternative suggestions:

"Investigations as to the presence of other offenses including data falsification were not known at that time."

"Which of the publications were affected was a matter that was never made public."

"In addition, gastric intramucosal pH values were manipulated so that in the restoration of splanchnic perfusion in sepsis patients, colloidal fluid resuscitation with hydroxyethyl starch appeared to be superior to albumin."

"Dr. Boldt had supervised a large number of dissertations with related publications and it can be assumed that there are numerous falsifications awaiting detection."

"one can read that '(...) publications showed data which were significantly different from the data in the theses, e.g. changed mean values and/or standard deviations although the two studies clearly described the same groups of patients. The type of changes and the circumstances strongly suggested that Dr. Boldt had falsified the original data without informing the graduate students.'"

Reference 17 has been cancelled and the rest of references renumbered.

Reviewer 2

Comments:

The author deals with a controversial topic in an illustrative and detailed form. The manuscript is of interest for the readers and deserves to be published. Very minor comments: Some grammar corrections are necessary, especially in the abstract (ie, the first paragraph is very difficult to follow). Reference 5 and 17 are the same one. It has to be corrected along with numbering of the rest of references.

Responses:

Some grammar corrections have been as identified. More importantly, the introduction and first part of the abstract has been rewritten (one sentence removed as given in red, sequence of sentences changed) from “Ethics in research is not just assessment of clinical trials by committees in institutions carrying these out, about ethical standards and regulatory compliance in clinical trials, in order, for instance, to guarantee that informed, voluntary and written consent to participation from subjects or patients of studies is obtained, but it is also about compliance with the general rules of good clinical practice and scientific standards. A narrative review of the literature concerning publication ethics was conducted as found in PubMed, Google Scholar, relevant news articles, position papers, websites and other sources. Ethical standards in the context of scientific publications are increasingly gaining attention.” to “Ethical standards in the context of scientific publications are increasingly gaining attention. A narrative review of the literature concerning publication ethics was conducted as found in PubMed, Google Scholar, relevant news articles, position papers, websites and other sources.”

The duplicate citation has been corrected as well (see reviewer 1).

Reviewer 3

Comments:

Thank you very much for writing this manuscript. The topic of scientific misconduct makes this a sad review, but the author discusses two recent examples well and explains clearly what can be done to potentially detect and fight unethical ways of doing and publishing research. I do not have specific comments.

Responses:

No suggestions for changes made. We wish to thank the reviewer for his evaluation.

Reviewer 4

Comments:

This is a good, interesting and well-written narrative review of the problems of ethical publication issues, with especial reference to two recent case series. There were a few very minor errors - eg, in methodology, the author refers to 'authors', although I think there's only one? The opening sentence of p8 para 2 needs revising. The middle sentence in para 1, p9 similarly. The only statement I would question is in the first bullet point of the conclusion: it's now 2016, and hand-written signatures are not necessary. Many journals gave up that requirement years ago, and we should really now be using electronic forms of signature. Lastly, figure 1 appears as a black square on the download. I guess this is a software glitch, but I have no idea what

the image is meant to be, and can't therefore comment as to whether this really is 'exponential' (as claimed in the text).

Responses:

“Authors” has been changed to “Author”.

Opening sentence of p8 para 2 “A possible pattern of fraud in science emanating from dissertations as a data source for fraudulent publications was found in two other retractions, one of which had already been withdrawn due to lack of ethics committee approval.” Has been changed to “Dissertations as a data source for fraudulent publications were found in two other retractions, one of which had already been withdrawn due to lack of ethics committee approval.”

Middle sentence of p9 para 1: The entire paragraph (“Conflicts of interest and the measures associated with them to ensure data integrity should have a special place similar to doping controls in competitive sports. Data comparisons should always be performed when a second source such as dissertations, habilitation theses, congress presentations or book articles are available.”) has been removed.

I agree with the reviewers considerations and have removed from the first bullet point of the conclusion the part of “with their hand written signature”.