Letters to the Editor

Misconduct and retraction

Malas prácticas y retractación

Dear Editor:

We read the publication *Misconduct as the main cause for retraction. A descriptive study of retracted publications and their authors* with a great interest.[1] The authors noted that «Specific strategies to limit this phenomenon must be implemented. It would be useful to standardize reasons and procedures for retraction. The development of a standard retraction form to be permanently indexed in a database might be relevant», and also noted for the observation of high number of retractions from Iran, China and Egypt. In fact, the misconduct is common problem and is observable in any countries. The mentioned three countries might have good system for monitoring the problem and management of misconduct observed in post publication period. Indeed, the management of the problematic publication is an interesting issue. Some problematic publications are neglected by publishers and the poor publishers, especially for predatory publishers, sometimes support the publications of works with misconducts.[2,3] The development of standard guideline for retraction is required and there should be the international collaboration for management of the problem.

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Conflicts of interest

None.

References

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Some proposals on tracking scientific misconduct

Algunas propuestas para seguir las malas prácticas científicas

Dear Editor:

We acknowledge the comments by Joob and Wiwaanitkit[f] regarding our research paper,[1] and we do agree with most of them. In our opinion, time has come for scientific journals and digital databases of scientific information (i.e. Medline) to provide readers with more information regarding retraction characteristics. It is important that these databases identify not only retracted papers, but also the causes for such retraction and at least classify them as "not related with ethic issues" or "breaching ethics retractions". While the first category should not compromise authors' or journals' credibility, since it might also include retractions due to mistakes attributed to a particular journal, the second would be linked mostly to cheating researchers and therefore classified as misconduct. Editors have the duty, and readers would like to know, who are those researchers committing misconduct. Having a tag in Medline classifying misconduct in detail should also serve as a tool for editors in order to track if an author or group of authors submitting a paper have a history of such retractions.

We think that a clearer link and visibility for retractions due to misconduct should be provided in international databases. As the International Committee of Medical Journals Editors state, besides showing clearly the retracted paper in the affected journal, "retracted articles should remain in the public domain and be clearly labelled as retracted".[2] We do not see any reason for not providing to the general public a more detailed reason of retraction, including full details on authorship.

The Committee of Publication Ethics (COPE: https://publicationethics.org) gives us interesting reflections on misconduct management within editors in chief.[3] It is clear that before communicating misconduct in databases such as PubMed or in the affected journal, misconduct has to be clearly proved in order to avoid unfounded discredit or even defamation to authors. Nevertheless, once misconduct has been demonstrated we do not see reasons to clearly highlight the affected research and researchers in electronic databases.

References

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2. International Committee of Medical Journal Editors. Scientific misconduct, expressions of concern, and retraction. (Accessed 01/06/2018.) Available at:

[f] Letter by Joob and Wiwaanitkit.