

ANALYSIS

A consensus statement on research misconduct in the UK

A BMJ/COPE high level meeting in London on 12 January 2012 agreed the following statement:

- This meeting believes that the UK's mechanisms for ensuring good research conduct and investigating research misconduct need to be strengthened
- Research misconduct is defined as behaviour by a researcher, intentional or not, that falls short of good ethical and scientific standards (Edinburgh 1999). Research misconduct includes fabrication, falsification, suppression, or inappropriate manipulation of data; inappropriate image manipulation; plagiarism; misleading reporting; redundant publication; authorship malpractice such as guest or ghost authorship; failure to disclose funding sources or competing interests; misreporting of funder involvement; and unethical research (for example, failure to obtain adequate patient consent). Research misconduct is important as it wastes resources, damages the credibility of science, and can cause harm (for example, to patients and the public)
- Primary responsibility for good research conduct rests with individual researchers. However, institutions have direct responsibility as employers to ensure good research conduct, and funders have a duty to hold institutions to account
- Research funders should require research institutions to appoint a senior named person as a research integrity officer and to adhere to an agreed code of conduct for research
- The code of conduct should mandate among other things:
 - The setting up of effective systems to prevent and detect misconduct, including the protection of whistleblowers and a duty on researchers to report misconduct
 - Proper investigation of allegations of research misconduct, including as a minimum the reporting of results of investigations to a national advisory and oversight body such as UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO)
 - Institutions must register and subscribe to such a body
- The advisory, support, and oversight roles of UKRIO should be enhanced, and it should be properly and securely financed.

Business, Innovation & Skills; Phil Campbell, *Nature*; Graeme Catto, University of Aberdeen; Iain Chalmers, James Lind Initiative; Nicola Dandridge, Universities UK; Sally Davies, Department of Health; Mike Farthing, UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO); Lester Firkins, James Lind Alliance; Iain Foulkes, Cancer Research UK; Andrea Garman, Government Office for Science; Fiona Godlee, editor, *BMJ* (co-chair); Malcolm Green, former vice principal, Faculty of Medicine, Imperial College London; Clara Gumpert, Karolinska Institute, Sweden; Christopher Hale, Universities UK; Evan Harris, Liberal Democrat's federal policy committee; Iona Heath, Royal College of General Practitioners; Carl Heneghan, Centre for Evidence Based Medicine; Ian Kennedy, UKRIO; Imran Khan, Campaign for Science and Engineering; Robert Paul Konigs, Committee of Inquiry on Allegations of Scientific Misconduct, Germany; Richard Lehman, visiting research fellow, Yale University; Louise Long, ABPI; Harvey Marcovitch, honorary fellow of Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health; Tony Mayer, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore; Neena Modi, Imperial College, London; Emma Morris, UCL; James Parry, UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO); Tony Peatfield, Medical Research Council, Research Councils UK; Nicola Perrin, Wellcome Trust; Michael Rawlins, National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE); Anna Rowland, General Medical Council; Julian Savulescu, *Journal of Medical Ethics*; Julian Sheather, BMA; Leonor Sierra, Sense about Science; Connie St Louis, City University London; Nick Steneck, University of Michigan Institute for Clinical and Health Research; David Sweeney, Higher Education Funding Council for England; Richard Thompson, Royal College of Physicians; Nick Topley, (TIME) Cardiff University School of Medicine; Elizabeth Wager, Committee on Publication Ethics (co-chair); Frank Wells, National Research Ethics Advisory Panel; Norman Williams, Royal College of Surgeons; Peter Wilmshurst, Royal Shrewsbury Hospital; and Kent Woods, Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency.

Journalists/observers: Martin Barrow, *Times*; Maria Cheng, Associated Press; Deborah Cohen, *BMJ*; Clive Cookson, *Financial Times*; Daniel Cressey, *Nature*; Sharon Davies, *BMJ*; Tony Delamothe, *BMJ*; Clare Dyer, journalist; Jack Grove, *Times Higher Education*; Richard Hurley, *BMJ*; Trevor Jackson, *BMJ*; Nina Lakhani, *Independent*; Jeremy Laurance, *Independent*; Helen Macdonald, *BMJ*; Melanie Newman, Bureau of Investigative Journalism; Sara Reardon, *Science*; Sara Schroter, *BMJ*; Jane Smith, *BMJ*; Aniket Tavare, *BMJ*.

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