



14 January 2012

## One in eight UK scientists has witnessed research fraud

Me gusta 2

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13 January 2012

By [Jack Grove](#)

Research misconduct is “alive and well” at UK universities, the British Medical Journal has claimed.

Findings from a survey by the BMJ published yesterday found that 13 per cent of UK-based scientists and doctors had witnessed colleagues fabricating or altering research data ahead of publication in peer-reviewed journals.

Of the 2,700 scientists and doctors who responded, 6 per cent admitted misconduct themselves when preparing or presenting research papers.

The results were disclosed at a meeting in London organised by the BMJ and the Committee on Publication Ethics (Cope) to highlight the need for better systems to deter, detect and investigate research misconduct.

Fiona Godlee, the BMJ’s editor in chief, said the survey showed that “there is a substantial number of cases [of misconduct] and that UK institutions are failing to investigate adequately, if at all”.

She added: “The BMJ has been told of junior academics being advised to keep concerns to themselves to protect their careers, being bullied into not publishing their findings or having their contracts terminated when they spoke out.”

Elizabeth Wager, Cope chair, added: “We see many cases of institutions not cooperating with journals and failing to investigate research misconduct properly.”

One of the speakers at the event, Malcolm Green, former vice-principal of the faculty of medicine at Imperial College London, said that “for every case of fraud that is detected there are a dozen or more that go undetected”.

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### Readers' comments

- **Admiral Forrest, Starfleet Command** 13 January, 2012

Well what a surprise - when scientists feel pressured to publish zillions of papers each year just to satisfy their paymasters, stress, bullying, whistle-blowing and outright fraud will be the ugly, inevitable results. In fact Einstein's research would never have been given a grant under this system (no apparent economic benefit), or if it did, he would have been sacked later on for doing too much thinking and not enough publishing.

- **Mr 95% Retread** 13 January, 2012

Self-plagiarism is the name of the game.

- **overgeneralization again** 13 January, 2012

Notwithstanding that fraud is an important issue, so is sloppy reporting.

The survey 'was emailed to 9036 academics and clinicians who had submitted articles to the BMJ or acted as peer

reviewers for the journal (response rate 31%),'

In other words, the response rate is low enough to have been affected by potential response biases and far from representing #UK –based scientists#

This is a particular community associated with a particular journal and says nothing about fraud in other areas of science.

- **Nigel Brown** 13 January, 2012

I agree that this is a sloppy headline and the sub-editor should be taken to task. It is also sloppy reporting as the 6% figure is awareness of insufficiently investigated cases not self- incrimination. Read the article!

BMJ operates in an area where many research supervisors may have clinical responsibilities and not be able to supervise students and staff as closely as bench-based scientists.

I know of a Dept where 100% of the scientists have witnessed "research fraud" - but this was by one person once. A minor enhancement of an image in a seminar by an inexperienced student fits the definition, but it does not make the Dept 100% fraudulent!

Come on BMJ and THE - apply the same standards to your work as we endeavour to do to ours. Fraud is an important issue and this puts it in danger of being trivialised.

- **Rattani** 13 January, 2012

This is a matter of utter disappointment. If our academicians and scientists are involved in research corruption, what lesson are we giving to the students about plagiarism and data theft.

All these rhetoric and shallow advises to our students about plagiarism, collusion are wasted if we ourselves do not practice what we preach.

Fabricating research work especially medical research is a more serious academic crime than plagiarism and collusion.

I can understand that most of the research work is funded by corporates who keep commercial interests before academic interests but would there be a stop to it.

- **Mick** 13 January, 2012

OK so the 'Hockey stick" data was manipulated... so what?

- **pippo** 14 January, 2012

"One in eight UK scientists has witnessed research fraud"

Are the other seven blind and deaf? or just hypocritical?

- **Steve** 14 January, 2012

@pippo

The probably didn't ask them and manipulated the data.

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