

Journals require authors to report their current affiliation, and any affiliation relevant to the submitted work. Institutional research productivity is usually associated to increased funding, higher ranking positions and greater admission applications. On the author side, publications are required in the ‘publish or perish’ dictum, and many universities provide extra honoraria for each published article that includes the affiliation. The American Psychological Association states that ‘the institutional affiliation identifies the location where the author or authors were when the research was conducted, which is usually an institution.’ It then goes on to recommend that a dual affiliation may be included ‘only if two institutions contributed substantial support to the study.’ To the best of our knowledge, this is the only known definition of affiliation. Neither the ICMJE nor COPE have issued recommendations or guidelines on what constitutes a properly reported affiliation.

We and others have observed that there are cases of incorrect or false reporting of institutional affiliations that might introduce a systemic bias in the current indicators that are used to rank universities and to rate researcher productivity. To determine the scope of this problem we conducted an exploratory case study in Chile on author affiliation misrepresentation for Scopus-indexed articles in 2016, the protocol of which we published recently.<sup>1</sup> In yet unpublished results from our study, we found that 38% of authors have multiple affiliations in at least one article that was not verifiable, and 40% of articles have at least one author in which it was not possible to verify the reported affiliation to a Chilean university. In 30% of author/article records for the year, we could not corroborate the reported affiliation to a Chilean university. The significant magnitude of the prevalence of unsubstantiated affiliations in this exploratory study underpins the need for a consensus on the definition of affiliation together with recommendations for both authors and journal editors. Aim To develop a consensus statement on the definition of author affiliation that will guide authors during the submission of their manuscripts and journal editors to identify potential breaches of research integrity. Method The development of this recommendation will be based on the Delphi method. We will first identify and define the key concepts of what an affiliation is following a broad literature review. Then we will develop an initial draft of the document that will be sent out for expert consultation and input (eg, ICMJE and COPE). Lastly, an iterative international survey with a broad-ranging roster of participants from the STEM disciplines will be conducted until consensus is reached. The resulting document will be published and disseminated to key stakeholders, including university ranking systems, funders, editors, and research integrity officers.

## REFERENCES

1. Bachelet VC, Uribe FA, Díaz RA, Vergara AF, Bravo-Córdova F, Carrasco VA, et al. Author misrepresentation of institutional affiliations: protocol for an exploratory case study. *BMJ*

72

### ‘EVIDENCE BASED MEDICINE’ – A ‘TROJAN HORSE’!!

Finbarr Condon-English. *University College Cork, Cork, Ireland*

10.1136/bmjebm-2019-EBMLive.80

The belief that research is being conducted in a coherent, comprehensive and credible manner is presently an illusory modus operandi. Meanwhile, physicians navigate clinical realities using

these dogmatic dicta, never thinking that prestigious journals could publish anything but honourable merit. A disheartening study revealed that roughly 85% of research endeavours are wasteful, being of low yield, circumspect validity or forever unpublished.<sup>1</sup> It appears data is being masqueraded as ‘evidence’ but is nothing more than a manipulated narrative to suit agendas. This gives the impression of progress, but rather only contributes to scientific inertia and possible patient maleficence. The dichotomy between the best intentions and malevolent outcome is widening. The £10bn in fines by pharma companies, from 2009-2014 reinforces this viewpoint.<sup>2</sup> For the practitioner, the surrendering to a maxim of ‘evidence-based medicine’ from the anecdotal, is optimal and professional. However, if the quest of enlightenment and knowledge leads to the acquisition of fallacious metrics and fictional conclusions, then this faithful surrender is nothing more than perilous servitude. The point at which one can no longer distinguish fact from fiction, is a damning diagnosis of delusion. This delusional state, if left unidentified and unfettered, will tend to evermore entropy and at a certain point, ignorant professional practice of pseudo-premises prevails, with perilous outcomes abounding. It is my contention, that the era of ‘publish or perish’ is as injurious to public health as any pathogen. It is extremely pathogenic, most pertinently chronically, with successive mutated forms of evidence accumulating in our ‘sacrosanct’ evidence-based paradigm, similar to our genome. It is imperative therefore, that EBMLive adopt the pillars of a Public Health paradigm, with the end goal of changing behaviour - ‘Risk Awareness, Risk Detection and Risk Communication.’ I recommend the creation of an independent centralised watchdog surveillance centre, where papers/proposals are screened. One funding stream could be subscription fees of researchers/publishers looking to prove quality control standards — akin to the Red Tractor label in the UK. This would place research that had met the certification standard, in better standing with the consumer. Furthermore, the centre could highlight current research that is high risk and perhaps instigate awareness campaigns, comparable to recalls on contaminated food produce. The centralised nature of such a research referee, would enable more optimal data handling, thereby adding capacity for improved systematic global exchange of ideas, with the aim of increasing rates of efficient, high yield innovation. In any treatment plan, the solution has to reflect the problem. As such the motives for sub-optimal data need to be elucidated. More specifically, differentiation between ignorance of scientific methodologies or intentional statistically sanctioned self-sabotage. We need to ensure that the ever-growing body of medicine is akin to controlled cellular replication and not a cancer.

## REFERENCES

1. Chalmers I, Glasziou P. Avoidable waste in the production and reporting of research evidence. *Lancet* 2009;**357**:86–9.
2. Kessel M, Mark K. Restoring the pharmaceutical industry’s reputation. *Nat Biotechnol* 2014;**35**:983–90.

73

### THE PROBLEM OF TRUTH IN EBM

Sietse Wieringa. *University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom. University of Oslo, Oslo, United Kingdom*

10.1136/bmjebm-2019-EBMLive.81

The EBM Manifesto has been developed as a response to a growing body of evidence that “suggests that most published