Principles of Good Reporting
An editor with a view

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Outline

- What are the principles?
- Is there a problem?
- Where is the problem?
- Might reporting guidelines help?
Principles

1. Lightness
2. Quickness
3. Exactitude
4. Visibility
5. Multiplicity
   • Consistency

Calvino 1985 Lectures for delivery at Harvard.
Principles of Good Reporting

- Accuracy
- Transparency
- Economy or Efficiency of Knowledge transfer
Principles of good reporting of research

- **Accuracy** (fairly represents the ‘truth’)
  - What was planned
  - What was done
  - What happened (results)
  - What we make of it

- **Transparency** (verifiable completeness)
  - Of research itself - publication
  - Of its components -
    - Enough detail to enable replication or verification
  - Enough info to assess error and bias
  - Access to data set

- **Economy** (transfer of information - communication)
  - Ease of reading and understanding
  - Accuracy/completeness of understanding
  - Journal/editorial economy/efficiency
Is there a problem?
Poor reporting of research

Accuracy / Transparency

- Published research evaluations of quality
  - CONSORT, STROBE, STARD, Others
  - Show poor quality of reporting
## Big and Small Journals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top 5% of Journals</th>
<th>Other 95% of Journals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reject 80+ % of papers</td>
<td>Reject fewer papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full time editors</td>
<td>Part-time editors -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large editorial/technical staff</td>
<td>Sparse editorial/technical staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>? Get better submissions</td>
<td>Get less robust submissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work to improve manuscripts.</td>
<td>Lack time to work with authors</td>
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<tr>
<td>? Less need for guidelines</td>
<td>? Guidelines most helpful</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Is IMRaD - too compressed?

IMRaD
- Intro
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion

Guidelines - e.g. STROBE
- Intro
  - Background/Rationale
- Methods
  - Design
  - Setting
  - Participants
  - Variables
  - Data sources/measurement
  - Bias
  - Study Size
  - Variables
  - Statistics
- Results
  - Participants
  - Descriptive data
  - Outcome data
  - Main results
  - Other analyses
- Discussion
  - Key results
  - Limitations
  - Interpretation
  - Generalizability
- Other information
  - Funding

Big Journals

Small Journals
Is there a problem?
Poor editing of submitted research

- For Accuracy/Transparency

- For economy of peer and editorial review?
  - largely ignored
  - how do editor’s work?
  - what resources do they need?
  - what would help them do a better job?
  - help for peer reviewers

- For economy of reading
  - largely ignored in published research
  - how do reader’s read research articles?
  - how could we make this easier for them?
Poor reporting or Poor quality?
Pyramid of Poor Research Quality

Falsifying - Fabrication
Failure to present data
Protocol violations
Poorly written/reported
Poorly done/inadequate

adapted from - John Bailar
Are Journals the right target for Equator?
Are journals the right target for Equator?
Hi,

im doing this project in school about The E Coli as an example of how water damages things...us.

Can u send me info about E coli and what it is and how it came into the waters and stuff???

But not pages of stuff Just the important points.

Thanks, Vanessa
Send to fishy_000@....
Where do manuscripts originate?

How Do US Journalists Cover Treatments, Tests, Products, and Procedures? An Evaluation of 500 Stories
Schwitzer G
IMRaD - too compressed?

Guidelines - e.g. STROBE

- **Intro**
  - Background/Rationale

- **Methods**
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- **Results**
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  - Descriptive data
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- **Discussion**
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- **Other information**
  - Funding

Reader
Could authors submit and journals publish the checklist? With text?

We used a computer generated random number …. 

Would this help authors write their papers? Would it help editors find information? Would it help some readers?
Editorial Perspective - Questions?

- Would guidelines be helpful for editors and readers?

- Should guidelines
  - Supplement IMRad?
  - Be built into manuscript submission systems?
  - Be part of published paper?
  - Be required for research grant submissions

- Would this help?
  - Editors?
  - Some readers?
  - Some researchers?

- Do we know enough about how editors edit, peer reviewers review and readers read?
Tradeoffs?

Accuracy

Transparency  Efficiency

126x65 to 132x761
528x75 to 558x166
481x692 to 568x785
233x143 to 303x212
Guidelines - some questions

- Accuracy
- Transparency
- Efficacy (of communication)

- Throughout research and publication cycles?
- Get large journals to adopt - smaller ones will follow?
- Appreciate journal’s responsibilities to increase reader efficiency - less is more.
Working together

Thank you