The EQUATOR Network:

Promoting responsible reporting of health research studies

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UK EQUATOR Centre,
University of Oxford

Pan American Health Organization
Washington DC
EQUATOR Network

• International initiative
  – Aims to improve **reliability** and **value** of health research publications by supporting transparent and accurate reporting of research studies

• ‘Umbrella’ organisation; key stakeholders:
  – Authors, editors & peer reviewers, educators; funders
    .. Everyone interested in improving the quality of research publications and of research itself

• Key goals:
  – To improve people’s health by making
    • Research publications more reliable
    • Easier to use research findings
  – To get the best returns and impact from investment in research for health
Why was EQUATOR set up?

- Wealth of evidence – widespread problems
Why was EQUATOR set up?

• .... Research literature is not fit for purpose

Electronic search strategies to identify reports of cluster randomized trials in MEDLINE: low precision will improve with adherence to reporting standards

Monica Taljaard, Jessie McGowan, Jeremy M Grimshaw, Jamie C Brehaut, Andrew McRae, Martin P Eccles, Allan Donner
Why was EQUATOR set up?

• Reporting guidelines exist but they are still not widely used
  – Adherence to reporting guidelines improves accuracy, completeness and transparency of research reports
Why was EQUATOR set up?

• **Immediate goal**
  To support better publication of research for health

• **Longer term goal:**
  Through improved reporting of current studies increase the quality of future research;

  Promote the generation of relevant, ethical and high quality research
EQUATOR focus

How we support improvement in research reporting and implementation of reporting guidelines? **We foster best practices & standards**

- Promotion of rigorous research reporting / highlighting problems resulting from inadequate reporting
- Provision of resources (e.g. organized validated standards)
- Education and training
- Research, evaluation, development
- Collaboration, global expansion
EQUATOR online resources

Enhancing the QUALity and Transparency Of health Research

Essential resources for writing and publishing health research

Library for health research reporting

- Search for reporting guidelines
- Not sure which reporting guideline to use?
- Reporting guidelines under development
- Visit the library for more resources

Reporting guidelines for main study types

- Randomised trials
- Observational studies
- Systematic reviews
- Case reports
- Qualitative research
- Diagnostic / prognostic studies
- Quality improvement studies
- Economic evaluations
- Animal pre-clinical studies
- Study protocols

See all 271 reporting guidelines

Toolkits

The EQUATOR Network works to improve the reliability and value of medical research literature by promoting transparent and accurate reporting of research studies.

EQUATOR highlights

3/03/2015 - Unique new EQUATOR course for health researchers

UK EQUATOR Centre Publication School, 8th-10th July 2015, St Anne's College, Oxford UK Fit for purpose? The secrets of success in biomedical research

News

Professor Doug Altman awarded BMJ Lifetime Achievement Award
7/05/2015

BioMed Central to publish new journal: Research Integrity and Peer Review
2/04/2015
Websites visited from almost every country in the world

In 2015: 20-24,000 visits per month

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Examples of courses and workshops

- Targeting
  - Editors, authors, reviewers
  - Early career researchers
  - Research students
  - Foundation doctors
  - Research sponsors
  - Research support staff

- Online learning
COBWEB study

- 41 MSc and PhD students
- Evaluation of a simple tool in 4 h writing session
- Randomised 6 ‘domains’ of trial report:
  - trial design, randomisation, blinding, participants, intervention, outcome descriptions
- Each student randomly allocated
  - 3 control domains (no tool, just section heading and empty box)
  - 3 intervention domains (tool – contained key elements from CONSORT E&E paper with examples of good reporting)
- Blinded assessment of outcomes
  - Completeness of reporting on a scale 0-10
## COBWEB results: it works!

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<th>B</th>
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<th>D</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outcome [unit of analysis I.C]</td>
<td>Tool Intervention</td>
<td>Writing with no support control</td>
<td>p value</td>
<td>95%CI</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Primary outcome - overall completeness [123,123]</td>
<td>7.1 ± 1.2</td>
<td>5.0 ± 1.6</td>
<td>≤0.001</td>
<td>[1.5;2.7]</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Randomization [20,21]</td>
<td>8.4 ± 2.4</td>
<td>4.6 ± 2.9</td>
<td>≤0.01</td>
<td>[1.1;4.4]</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Blinding [21,20]</td>
<td>6.9 ± 2.4</td>
<td>6.2 ± 2.3</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>[-0.7;2.0]</td>
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<td>Participants [21,20]</td>
<td>6.7 ± 2.0</td>
<td>4.5 ± 2.4</td>
<td>≤0.01</td>
<td>[0.8;3.6]</td>
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<td>Intervention [20,21]</td>
<td>7.1 ± 1.5</td>
<td>5.3 ± 2.0</td>
<td>≤0.01</td>
<td>[0.7;2.9]</td>
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<td>Outcomes [20,21]</td>
<td>6.1 ± 2.1</td>
<td>6.4 ± 3.0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trial design [21,20]</td>
<td>8.1 ± 2.3</td>
<td>2.7 ± 1.9</td>
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mean ± SD
Prestigious Annual Lectures

**ANNUAL LECTURE 2014**: Presented by Dr Drummond Rennie
Date: 16 May 2014
Location: Hôtel Européen Georges Pompidou, Paris, France

The 5th EQUATOR Annual Lecture was presented by Dr Drummond Rennie, Adjunct Professor of Medicine, University of California San Francisco and until recently Deputy Editor (West), JAMA. Read More

**ANNUAL LECTURE 2013**: Presented by Prof Kay Dickersin
Date: 12 September 2013, 17:30 – 18:30
Location: Chicago, USA (Peer Review Congress venue)

The 4th EQUATOR Annual Lecture was presented by Professor Kay Dickersin, Professor at the Johns Hopkins Public Health, Director of the Center for Clinical Practice. Read More

**ANNUAL LECTURE 2012**: Reporting and reproducible research: the year 2012
Date: 15 March 2012
Location: Germany

The 3rd EQUATOR Annual Lecture was presented by Professor of Medicine, Health Research and Policy at the Johns Hopkins University. Read More

**ANNUAL LECTURE 2011**: Better reporting of better research = better health
Date: 11 November 2011
Location: Portland, USA

The 2nd EQUATOR Annual Lecture was presented by Hazel Thompson, Australian National University. Read More

**ANNUAL LECTURE 2009**: Redescribing medicine: reporting or rethinking it?
Date: 7th September 2009
Location: Vancouver, Canada

The 1st EQUATOR Annual Lecture was presented by Dr Richard Horton, The Lancet. Read More

**ANNUAL LECTURE 2008**: Meeting the research information needs of those involved in comparative research
Date: 26th June 2008
Location: London, UK

The 9th EQUATOR Annual Lecture was presented at the Network Meeting. Read More

**2015 REWARD | EQUATOR Conference**
Increasing value and reducing waste in biomedical research
Edinburgh, 28th-30th September

Confirmed speakers include Doug Altman, Rustam Al-Shahi Salman, Iain Chalmers, An-Wen Chan, Paul Glasziou, Trish Groves, John Ioannidis, Frank McIndoe, David Moher, Andrew Morris, Janet Wilsely
http://researchwaste.net/researchwastequator-conference/
EQUATOR – PAHO collaboration: Relevance

- Adequate reporting of health research, the development of research reporting standards, improving competencies of and support for human resources involved in research, among other things, are central to leading policies on research for health.

Policy on Research for Health (Americas) CD49/10 2009

63rd WHA. WHO Strategy on Research for Health 2010
EQUATOR – PAHO Collaboration

• Memorandum of understanding, 2010
  – Support the Policy on Research for Health of the Americas by raising the standards in the reporting

• First projects carried under the memorandum
  – EQUATOR website and main reporting guidelines translated to Spanish
  – Promotion of reporting guidelines in Latin America and the Caribbean; awareness raising
  – Dissemination and promotion of new guidelines (PAJPH)

• Other projects
  – Further development of Spanish / Portuguese resources
  – Series of webinars on research reporting and reporting guidelines, workshop for journal editors
  – Librarians’ Network
  – Integration with scholarships (e.g. OAS, Grupo Coimbra de Universidades Brasileras) and other capacity development programs
Bienvenido al sitio web de EQUATOR. Este es un centro de recursos para la promoción de la comunicación de los informes de estudios clínicos en salud y se ha desarrollado en colaboración con la Organización Panamericana de la Salud (OPS/OMS).

Las páginas están dirigidas a los profesionales de la salud, estudiantes, investigadores y cualquier persona interesada en la promoción de la calidad y la transparencia en la comunicación de los informes de los estudios clínicos en salud.

La biblioteca contiene una colección de guías de informes de investigación, incluyendo directrices, políticas y protocolos relacionados con la escritura, revisión y publicación de informes de investigación en salud. Estos documentos están dirigidos principalmente a autores de artículos de investigación, editores de revistas científicas, revisores y a quienes desarrollan las directrices de publicación.

www.espanol.equator-network.org
How to shift the ‘reporting culture’

• Working towards ...
  – Accurate, complete and transparent reporting of research studies is considered the norm

• How to achieve this?
  – Leadership and influence at every level
  – Clearly defined policies, requirements and expectations
  – Provision of tools, standards, and other resources
  – Education, training, advocacy and examples
  – Motivation and incentives
  – Application of safeguards and checks

• Collaboration of all key stakeholders
  – Researchers, research organisations, sponsors and regulators
  – Journals (editors, peer reviewers, publishers)
  – Other organisations (higher education, IRBs, REC, development and intergovernmental agencies, …)
What can you do to help: promote and practice

- All research needs to be **well designed, well conducted** and **well reported** to be truly useful and to impact on health improvements

- Complete, accurate and transparent reporting is an **integral** part of responsible research conduct

- Adherence to reporting guidelines
  - Decreases honest reporting errors and omissions
  - Improves the reliability, usability and usefulness of publications

- Integrate these guidelines with
  - Research management and review processes (e.g. journals, IRBs / RECs, thesis review panels, etc)
  - High education activities
“Without accessible and usable reports, research cannot help patients and their clinicians.”

Chalmers I. & Glasziou P. Avoidable waste in the production and reporting of research evidence. Lancet 2009

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