Improving the reporting of oncology research

Health research has a problem!
A research paper is useful when:
• Readers can understand it
• Reviewers have enough information to assess it
• Clinicians can use it to inform their decision-making
• Systematic reviewers can include details of study methods in their review
• Findings can be included in a meta-analysis

Unfortunately, much health research is:
• Never published
• Published, but not in sufficient detail to be useful

Are oncology randomised controlled trials reported well?
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Does oncology research have the same reporting problems as other areas of health research? We looked at reviews of the quality of reporting and methodology in oncology clinical trials.

**Methods:**
• Searched PubMed and the Cochrane Methodology Database for reviews of the quality of reporting and methodology in oncology trials published 1996-2015
• Selected 20 reviews assessing trial reporting against CONSORT 2010 or a CONSORT extension

**Findings:**
• The reviews covered many clinical areas and reviewed trial reporting before and after the introduction of CONSORT
• The quality of reporting the CONSORT items varied greatly between reviews
• Some reviews reported an improvement in some aspects of trial reporting over time
• Overall reporting of the CONSORT items was inadequate

**Conclusions:**
Although some CONSORT checklist items were well reported, overall reporting was poor. Trial reporting must improve so that data can be incorporated into systematic reviews and meta-analyses and research can be reproduced.

Manuscript in preparation.

The solution: reporting guidelines
Checklists of the minimum information your paper should include:
• Generic guidelines for general study types
  • CONSORT for randomised trials
  • STROBE for observational studies
• Guidelines for clinical areas
  • e.g. oncology-specific guidelines

Find all reporting guidelines in the EQUATOR Network database: www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines/

EQUATOR Oncology Project
Giving cancer researchers the tools to write useful research papers
• Surveying authors, journal editors, and peer reviewers about problems in research manuscripts and publications
• Establishing interdisciplinary advisory groups of clinicians, oncologists, methodologists, journal editors, and representatives from CRUK and EQUATOR
• Collecting and reviewing available guidance on research conduct and reporting
• Developing new web-based resources for oncology researchers
• Promoting the use of reporting guidelines
• The EQUATOR Oncology Project Current Awareness Bulletin: latest issues in the methods and reporting of cancer research (shona.kirtley@csm.ox.ac.uk)

We need your help to improve oncology reporting! Please send us your suggestions for the EQUATOR Oncology Project
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