

EDITORIAL

THE EQUATOR NETWORK

- *why should researchers, peer reviews, and editors care about the quality of medical research?* •

Liliane Lins*

* Specialist in Stomatology and Maxillofacial Surgery. Ph.D. in Human Pathology (FIOCRUZ-UFBA). Habilitation in Bioethics (School of Medicine, Federal University of Bahia). Full Professor at BAHIANA - School of Medicine and Public Health. Associate Professor at School of Medicine, Federal University of Bahia. BJMHH Scientific Editor. E-mail: lilianelinskusterer@bahiana.edu.br; liliane.lins@ufba.br

The globalization process and the development of digital tools have two aspects: they disseminate knowledge, but they can also facilitate scientific misconduct. In an era in which researchers depend on research productivity to get public funding for research, it is essential to be aware of potential conflicts of interests due to fallibility of human nature. Not only fabrication, falsification and plagiarism damages science, but also methodological errors and inadequate reporting of scientific studies.

A literature review has shown that even when authors used randomized designs, their findings sometimes could not be generalized. Study findings are hardly generalized, including those coming from randomized designs. Most published studies have a high risk of bias due to methodological issues comprising study design and inadequacy of reporting.⁽¹⁾ The low quality of evidence requires the use of reporting guidelines by the scientific community, including authors, peer reviewers, and editors, as a way to prevent scientific misconduct and to promote transparency in research.

The Brazilian Journal of Medicine and Human Health strongly recommends to the scientific community the use of reporting guidelines. The EQUATOR Network⁽²⁾ is an international organization that aggregates researchers, journal editors, peer reviewers, guidelines developers, and other collaborators with the mission to improve the quality and transparency of reporting health research. The Network develops online resources for the scientific editorial team as well as online training courses focusing on the use of reporting guidelines as a way to improve the quality of research design and conduct.

Guidelines for reporting research in health are important tools in order to preserve research integrity and publication transparency. In June 2016, the EQUATOR website had links to more than 300 reporting guidelines, available at <http://www.equator-network.org/>.⁽²⁾ The initiative aims to achieve accurate and transparent reporting of health research making efforts to support reproducibility, usefulness and integrity of research reports.

According to the EQUATOR Network website, the organization has the following major goals: to develop online resources, tools and other materials related to health research reporting; to promote the use of reporting guidelines and good research reporting practices; to assist in the development, dissemination and implementation of reporting guidelines; to support journals, universities and other

organizations in implementing reporting guidelines; to undertake research projects enhancing the value of health-related research; and to set up a global network of local EQUATOR centers to facilitate the improvement of health research reporting on a worldwide scale.(2) The main reporting guidelines, according to study types comprises CONSORT for randomized trials, STROBE for observational studies, PRISMA for systematic reviews, CARE for case reports, among others. All those can be downloaded at <http://www.equator-network.org/>.

By adopting the EQUATOR Network recommendations, the Brazilian Journal of Medicine and Human Health aims to prevent the misuse of public funding in research and to strengthen its compromise with the truth in science.

REFERENCES

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