

## Stem cell fraud is a warning for scientific journals

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**T**he detection of a fraud regarding stem cell research made by Korean veterinarian Woo Suk Hwang has not only shocked the international scientific community, but also put into question the peer reviewing system used by scientific journals. The spurious research results were published in the prestigious journal “Science”, in February 2004 and May 2005 and shortly after had international repercussions – due to the hope which stem cell therapy represents – until suspicions of manipulation became public and then confirmed by a committee from Seoul University, to which Hwang was connected.

If data had been profoundly scrutinized and the results been contested during the review of the works, and if other specialists had been invited to make a greater examination of this research, the veterinarian and his team would have been forced to prove the validity of their claims, and chances of detecting fraud would have been increased.

Peer reviewing, a critical tool for validating and giving credibility to scientific innovations has sometimes been made without adequate criteria and rigorousness. As a result, in certain cases, articles end up being published without their contents being accurately assessed thereby harming the image of the publication. Although reviewing is voluntary work amongst many other professional activities, when someone is invited to assess an article, they should bear in mind the responsibility involved in this task. If they do not have enough time, or if there is conflict of interests, or if they do not consider themselves as capable of analyzing the theme, they should decline the invitation.

The Editor, on the other hand, plays a key role in this process; he cannot be a mere “distributor” of works. He has to be aware of the paper contents, and he should read more than just the abstracts. Accordingly, he will be able to make reasonable decisions in critical cases, avoiding publishing articles that do not have the required scientific thoroughness

and which could damage the reputation of the journal.

For that reason in the Brazilian Journal of Cardiovascular Surgery (BJCVS), I have tried to maintain, whenever possible, close connections with the Associate Editors, Editorial Council, reviewers and “ad hoc” referees. This practice enables the journal to continue publishing thoroughly reviewed articles and to play its role in disclosing information on cardiovascular surgery, always focusing on ethics, as it has been doing since its creation 20 years ago.

Concurrently, the journal has been introducing tools to facilitate the flow of works. Our website ([www.rbccv.org.br](http://www.rbccv.org.br)), in addition to accelerate work submission and the reviewing processes, enables access to editions published since 1996, by either using authors names or “key words”. The ever increasing number of people interested, more than 180 in March, proves its success. We are open to comments and suggestions from colleagues in order to improve our website.

Online versions of scientific journals have been gaining more space and relevance. In this edition, we are publishing a special article written by web designer Eliana Sales de Souza, showing interesting aspects and advantages of publishing works on the Internet.

Scielo, by the way, in trying to keep up with the trends of on-line publishing, is implementing the Scielo Publishing System. According to the institution’s newsletter, “the system covers all online publishing processes for scientific publications made directly on the Internet, from the submission of manuscripts to their publishing in the Scielo collection, including the creation of “site access and impact counters” and the creation of links to national and international information sources. According to the institution’s newsletter, starting in March, a schedule to adopt the SciELO publishing system by other periodicals of the collection will be decided. The process will consider the interests and major characteristics of each journal, such as publishing in

English, the manner of article submission and interest in using the system.

We will endeavor to make BJCVS one of the first journals to use this new system, which will bring many benefits and a greater visibility at an international level. Another good piece of news is that PubMed Central is accepting submission of individual articles published by journals that are not indexed in the Medline database or that are not included in PubMed Central by authors.

PubMed Central (PMC) is a digital library for publications within the Biotechnology area developed and operated by the U.S. National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI). Initiated in 2000, this system includes many international journals. Journal participation is voluntary, as long as it complies with PMC publishing standards. Scielo is developing a marking and exiting format that will meet these standards so that Scielo journals will be able to participate in PMC.

Articles sent by authors will be included in the PubMed database and will be identified in the following manner [PubMed – author manuscript in PMC]. In order to read these articles, one must search by author manuscript [sb].

To facilitate its inclusion, the BJCVS is making two minor changes in the articles to comply with the Vancouver Directives (available in the Portuguese version in our website). “Discussion” will only be accepted and not “Comments”, as some authors use, and “Bibliography References” will be titled only as “References”. Incidentally, BJCVS is also included in Scopus, a database maintained by Elsevier, which is

more extensive than Medline.

At the end of last year, CNPq granted us a publishing sponsorship of 18 thousand Brazilian reals, which will be used for the printing and posting costs of this edition. We would like to thank the contribution made by the Executive Board of the Brazilian Society of Cardiovascular Surgery (SBCCV) in its effort to help to make this Journal’s existence possible. We are also looking for new support from advertisers. We would like to take this opportunity to welcome the Heart Hospital, an old partner, back to our pages.

We are publishing in this edition, the guidelines for Surgery Procedures in Aortal Diseases, with comments by Dr. Joseph Coselli. This is a thorough research, which enriches our journal.

Unlike previous years, RBCCV will not publish the summaries of Oral Presentations from the 33rd SBCCV Congress, as the program was a supplement to volume 21.1 and the summaries have publishing value. But, we are making available summaries from the Free Themes presented in the IX São Paulo Cardiovascular Surgery Society Congress, which was held in November 2005 in Águas de Lindóia.

My warmest regards,



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