



INTEGRITY IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH: WHERE ARE WE NOW ?

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Why honest researchers drift to questionable research practices?

Questionable research practices (QRPs) operate in the ambiguous space between what one might consider best practices and academic misconduct. It's between honest errors and fraud (Fabrication, Falsification, Plagiarism). QRPs examples are: selectively report hypothesis/data; exclude data post hoc; HARKing (Hypothesing After Results are Known); chrysalis effect; misuse of statistics; omission of citations; etc... Prevalence of QRPs is debated. Causes are numerous: pressure to publish, number of new PhDs without any job, competition, culture to publish positive results (style of writing), researchers' assessment based on volume of papers, hijack of journals by academics,... All stakeholders have responsibility: authors, editors, reviewers, publishers, universities, research agencies, regulators, etc... Causes of QRPs are likely to be the system, not the person. For the researchers, there is disjunction in his/her aspiration and the reality of the outcome (failure to publish). The first step is a goal blockage (other prevent access to publications), as manuscripts are rejected due to non-statistically significant results. Without publications, tenure will be denied and/or job prospects limited. Fear, anger, anxiety can potentially compromised livelihood. Anger is directed towards editors, reviewers or publication process. Engagement in QRPs could be the solution, as colleagues do so.