

Newsletter nr 1 – June 2015

Netherlands Research Integrity Network



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In this newsletter:

- Foreword
- World Conference on Research Integrity
- Research Integrity Congress Erasmus MC
- News:
 - New journal: Research Integrity and Peer Review
 - Horizon 2020 subsidy for RI research
- Highlights:
 - New publication on the OPEN project
 - Recent commentaries about RI
 - Research article: Plagiarism in South African management journals
- New on the website
- Upcoming events

Foreword – by Fenneke Blom

We are very pleased to send you the first newsletter of the NRIN! In our newsletters you will find relevant news, upcoming events and reflections on recent developments, highlights of research, books and more.

In this first newsletter we look back at the 4th World Conference on Research Integrity, together with some colleagues. It was a great conference, and a boost to the motivation for this network. As

The 4th World Conference on Research Integrity, May 31st-June 3rd

From May 31st to June 3rd the fourth World Conference on Research Integrity (WCRI) took place in Rio de Janeiro. Previous editions were in Lisbon (2007), Singapore (2010) and Montreal



our Flemish colleague Simon Godecharle writes in his reflection on the conference, no single initiative is going to change the research culture, we have to connect to contribute to a better system and culture. And this also underlines that the NRIN is not just for the Dutch or people in the Netherlands: several international contributions to this newsletter were made, and about 15% of our members signed up from abroad. Let's continue to grow, both nationally and internationally, and exchange, collaborate and learn together in order to contribute – each from our own diverse position or background – to our shared goal: to improve the research culture.

Crucial for the NRIN's activities and website development, is the need of everybody who is contributing in whatever way to that shared goal. So please let us know what the NRIN could and should do to help or support you in your work on RI. Share your suggestions at info@nrin.nl.

I ended my presentation in Rio with the remark that you have to be enthusiastic about your work. The launch of the network, the world conference in Rio de Janeiro, our first newsletter and next week our first event: the past weeks were really busy, but contributed substantially to my work drive and work satisfaction!

(2013). And we are delighted to announce that the [fifth WCRI](#) will be organized in Amsterdam! So mark May 28-31 2017 in your agenda.

In this newsletter we share some reflections on the 4th WCRI. Read more about the conference on our [website](#), such as a contribution by Sander van den Bogert (who won one of the awards for most promising research projects in the Doctoral Forum), Joeri Tjindink's expectations and worries in '[moral values meet sultry samba](#)', links to other sources and the [slides](#) of the presentation about the NRIN.

Research Integrity: an interdisciplinary research field? – by Simon Godecharle

“The 4th World Conference on Research Integrity” shows that the general attention on research integrity and misconduct is shifting step by step towards the way science is structured. Gradually, the structure, the system and the various players and motivations that fuel them, come forward, rather than portraying the fraudulent scientist as an exception, as a rotten apple in an otherwise perfectly healthy basket. Yet the various players keep looking at each other when it comes to finding a solution: scientists, research funds, journals, universities, etc. Should we finance more replication research? Or should we give rewards for peer review? If so, who should assign these rewards? Should we obligate researchers to share their research data? And if so, who is responsible for checking up on it? Should we organise more training? Who should be trained: professors or students? Maybe we should develop a new guideline, which harmonises the current contradictions.

These and many other questions are fertile ground for further research. Gradually a research field of research integrity is taking shape, in which the matter is approached by researchers from an interdisciplinary perspective. In order to internalize ethics, a diverse approach is required. No single solution will solve the problem by itself. A combination of remedies can contribute to a culture of research integrity.

[Simon Godecharle](#) is affiliated to the Research Foundation Flanders (FWO) and the Centre for Biomedical Ethics and Law at KU Leuven.

A view from the side-line – by Herman Eijsackers

This was my first visit to the WCRI, and therefore my impressions are just a view from the side-line and inspired by the fact that Wageningen University Research Centre not only exists of a university (top 3 in it's field) but also of knowledge institutes that do research that is policy supporting and market focussed. Because of this, I conclude that the focus of these four days was mostly on universities. Other research institutions were barely discussed. Sessions about RI activities in industry and in relation to commercial activities drew little attention. I was startled by that, because the institutional context, the work culture and practical incentives are very different in these contexts. The problems with RI in these institutions fairly differ from those in universities.

During the focus track session in which there was only debate (to me the best part of the conference), it was attempted to image the issues in RI and diverse institutions in total, under the lead of Lex Bouter and Melissa Anderson. However, the university's perspective predominated again.

Therefore I think it is a beautiful challenge to the NRIN to ascertain for the Dutch situation how RI is perceived and handled in the universities, governmental agencies (such as RIVM, Deltares and 'Wageningen'), applied institutions (such as TNO and Sanquin) and industrial knowledge institutes (such as Unilever and Philips).

Herman Eijsackers is chair of the science advisory board and member of the Scientific Integrity Committee at Wageningen University and Research Centre.

5th World Conference on Research Integrity

Amsterdam, May 28th-31st, 2017

The fifth edition of the world conference will take place in Amsterdam, from May 28th to 31st.

Pre-register at www.wcri2017.org.

For more information contact the conference secretariat at events@vumc.nl.



Research Integrity congress at Erasmus MC, June 18th – by Fenneke Blom

It was a positive [event](#), in several ways. The focus of the program was on what we can do to change the culture, on creating opportunities in stead of complaining about the situation. This shift in focus - from the recognition of the prevalence and broadness of research integrity issues, towards starting to make a change - was illustrated by Hugh Whittall's presentation on the research culture in the UK and his remark: "The question is: who will take the first step (and who will step with them)". Ann Tenbrunsel then pointed out ethical 'blind spots' that hinder responsible conduct of research, and on which attention could (should) be focussed. One of these blind spots is the dark side of rewards. Lynn Stout also discussed this issue in her presentation on cultivating conscience by quoting George Washington: "Few man have the honour to withstand the highest bidder". Don't tempt researchers too much to be bad. She explained how the social context can stimulate prosocial behaviour, for example by having an authority telling you to do so and peers showing this behaviour. For the same reason, one bad apple can really spoil the whole barrel.

At the end of the day I won one of the books ([Cultivating conscience - how good laws make good people](#) by Lynn Stout) in the best-quotes-of-the-day contest, by quoting Lex Bouter: "*Sloppy science is a larger evil than research misconduct*". So, I might be posting more about this topic!

Additionally to these speakers, a few short perspectives and several flash stories were shared and Pandemonium theatre performed their play 'Con[science]'. The play was very well received and to my opinion this English version was even better than the [original in Dutch](#).

Another positive note came from one of the organisers, Medard Hilhorst, in his flash story: we should not be naming and shaming, but focus on best practices instead.

It was a long day, but it certainly did not feel like that, time flies when you're learning important things and having fun!



News

New journal: Research Integrity and Peer Review - By Daniel Shanahan, associate publisher BioMed Central

Research integrity and peer review are fundamental to the practice of good science; however, traditionally it has been hard to find a suitable place to publish studies that advance our understanding of this. Therefore, [BioMed Central](#) is delighted to announce the launch of a new Open Access journal, [Research Integrity and Peer Review](#). Research Integrity and Peer Review is an international, peer reviewed journal that encompasses all aspects of integrity in research publication, including peer review, study reporting, and research and publication ethics. Particular consideration is given to submissions that address current controversies and limitations in the field and offer potential solutions.

The journal has four Editors-in-Chief; each co-Editor-in-Chief will head up their own section covering the following topics: Peer Review (edited by [Liz Wager](#)); Research Reporting (edited by [Iveta Simerá](#)) and Research and Publication Ethics (edited by [Stephanie Harriman](#) and [Maria Kowalczyk](#)). The journal will operate under the open peer review model whereby all of the peer review reports will be published alongside the final article with each reviewer named.

The journal is now [open for submissions](#). If you have any questions, or would like to get involved with the journal, please contact researchintegrity@biomedcentral.com.

Horizon 2020 subsidy for research into scientific integrity

Hub Zwart and Willem Halffman (Philosophy and Science studies, Radboud University Nijmegen) receive a two million subsidy from the EU-programme Horizon 2020 for research into scientific integrity. They lead an international team of researchers from seven European countries. First they will do an inventory on available ethics codes in Europe, and on how these are handled by research institutions and scientific journals. Development of teaching materials about ethical dilemmas and casuistry will also be part of the project.

Highlights

Recommendations to reduce the incomplete dissemination of research findings from clinical trials - *By Ana Marušić and Joerg Meerpohl, authors*

To inform medical decision-making, respect the altruism of trial participants and maintain public trust in clinical research, such evidence should be made available in an easily accessible and unbiased way. However, it is estimated that about half of research findings are either not published at all or only selectively. Healthcare professionals and policymakers are therefore frequently unable to make decisions based on the entire relevant research evidence.

The EU-funded [project OPEN](#) (Overcome failure to Publish nEgative fiNDings) that ran from November 2011 to October 2013 brought together academics and stakeholders from across Europe to develop evidence-informed recommendations and strategies for overcoming the failure to publish negative research findings.

The project recently published its recommendations for key stakeholders in health research to reduce the incomplete dissemination of research findings from clinical trials ([Meerpohl et al. 2015](#)). These recommendations were based on the findings of 11 work packages and the discussions during a 2-day workshop in May 2013, attended by the OPEN project partners, researchers from another EU-funded project on publication bias – UNCOVER, and selected key stakeholders from across the world. General recommendations ([Table 1](#)) are directed to all stakeholders, while 47 specific recommendations ([Table 2](#)) target funding agencies, pharmaceutical and device industry, research institutions, researchers (systematic reviewers and trialists), research ethics committees, trial registries, journal editors and publishers, regulatory agencies, benefit assessment institutions and legislators.

The results of the OPEN project will hopefully complement and support ongoing and future activities aiming for more transparency in clinical trial results dissemination.

overcome the failure to publish negative findings

OPEN



The recommendations from the OPEN project coincide with a number of important decisions at the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and the European Parliament, to increase the transparency of clinical trials in Europe.

Recent commentaries about RI

Publication of inaugural lecture prof. Lex M Bouter

An English version of the inaugural lecture – titled *Perverse incentives or rotten apples?* – formally starting Lex Bouter's chair on Methodology and Integrity is published as a commentary in [Accountability in Research \(2015, 22:148-161. doi:10.1080/08989621.2014.950253\)](#). If you cannot access this document, please send an e-mail to info@nrin.nl, there are some free downloads available.

Corruption: Good governance powers innovation

Alina Mungiu-Pippidi pleads for a watchdog and more activism to tackle corruption and to empower science and technology to fulfill their potential, in her commentary in [Nature \(2015, 518:295-297. doi:10.1038/518295a\)](#). Corruption and innovation in a country are inversely correlated, she indicates. Science and technology will benefit from corruption control, for example by limiting single bidding for contracts or grants.

Three-part series on Conflict of Interest in NEJM by Lisa Rosenbaum

The New England Journal of Medicine published a three-part series on Conflict of interest. The author shares her thoughts on this topic and tries to incite the reader with critical questions on the issue's what and why.

Part 1: Reconnecting the Dots — Reinterpreting Industry–Physician Relations, [doi: 10.1056/NEJMms1502493](#)

part 2: Understanding Bias — The Case for Careful Study, [doi: 10.1056/NEJMms1502497](#)

part 3: Beyond Moral Outrage — Weighing the Trade-Offs of COI Regulation, [doi: 10.1056/NEJMms1502498](#)

Read more news and highlights on our [website](#)

Research article: Plagiarism in South African management journals

In South Africa the budget of universities heavily depends on the number of articles published, which may be a strong perverse incentive. Adele Thomas and Gideon P. de Bruin found strikingly high levels of similarity (plagiarism) in academic articles in management journals in this system. The authors used the software program Turnitin to assess plagiarism in 371 published academic articles in South African management journals, and detected that in remarkably high proportions of the articles had high or excessive similarities (respectively, 27.2% and 21.3%). Find the full article [here](#).

Do you know about similar studies investigating plagiarism by academic staff in other countries and other disciplines? Please share them [with us](#).

New on the website

The website is constant in development. Recently, some new items and categories were added:

- The category Blogs in the Links menu
- Educational and fiction videos in the Library
- Research articles are clustered by topic
- The first teaching materials are available online
- Reflections on events in the Agenda archive

We hope you appreciated and enjoyed this first newsletter.

NRIN devotes a great deal of attention to the newsletter's and website's content and would greatly appreciate your suggestions of documents, weblinks etc. you believe to belong in this newsletter and/or on the website.

You are most welcome to submit a commentary, letter or other contribution to this newsletter to newsletter@nrin.nl. Send contributions or suggestions for the website to webmaster@nrin.nl.

Thanks in advance!

Credit: David Zinn www.zinnart.com

Upcoming events

Research Waste / EQUATOR Conference

September 28-30th, 2015

Edinburgh, UK. [John McIntyre Conference Centre](#)

[The conference](#) aims to:

- Review the progress made by research regulators, academic institutions, researchers, funders, and publishers against Research Waste series recommendations
- Presentations and posters on problems and potential solutions aimed at making research production more efficient and better reported
- Develop a consensus statement and action plan for making progress against Research Waste series recommendations

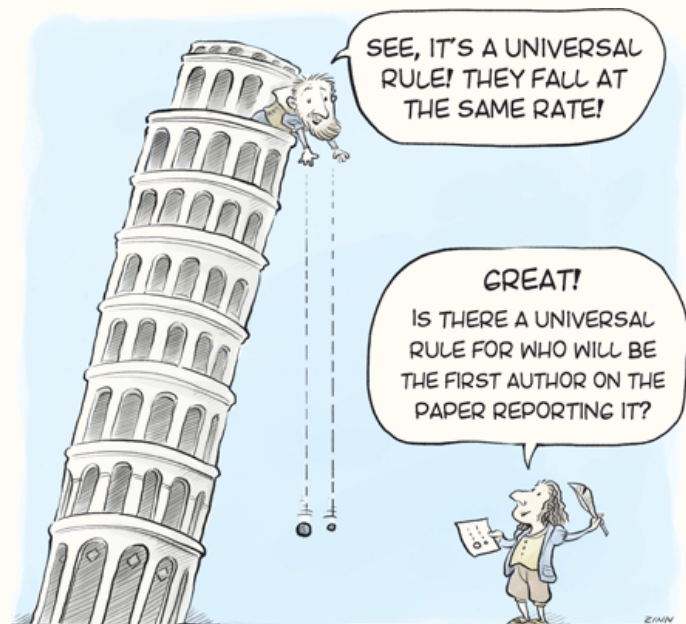
5th World Conference on Research Integrity

Amsterdam, May 28th-31st, 2017

The fifth edition of the world conference will take place in Amsterdam, from May 28th to 31st. More information to be announced later.

Pre-register at www.wcri2017.org.

More upcoming events about RI? [Let us know](#).



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