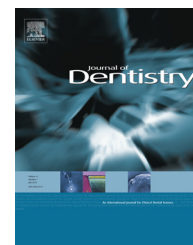


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## Conference Report

## Improving the quality of papers submitted to dental journals

Transcription of session for editors, associate editors, publishers and others with an interest in scientific publishing held at IADR meeting in Cape Town on Wednesday, 25 June 2014

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## ABSTRACT

This satellite symposium was the fourth in a series for editors, publishers, reviewers and all those with an interest in scientific publishing. It was held on Wednesday 25th June 2014 at the IADR International Session in Cape Town, South Africa. The symposium attracted more than 180 attendees. This symposium placed an emphasis on how the quality of papers submitted to dental journals could be improved. The panel included representation from editors, researchers and publishers from North America, India and the Gulf States. The symposium identified a number of challenges for editors and publishers, including the poor quality of many papers submitted to dental and other scientific journals, plagiarism, attempted duplicate publication and sometimes fraudulent results. Where possible speakers are identified by name.

A further event is planned for the IADR meeting at Boston on March 11th 2015. Involvement is open to editors, associate editors, publishers and others with an interest in scientific publishing. All those with an interest will be welcome to attend.

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## Kenneth Eaton – Chair

Ladies and gentlemen, may I welcome you to this satellite symposium for editors, publishers, reviewers and others with an interest in scientific publication. It is amazing to see so many of you here (just over 180 people attended). Last year, the previous satellite symposium considered *How is research publishing is going to progress in the next 20 years*.<sup>1</sup> A number of challenges were identified. Hence the need for today's symposium to discuss how to address them and to consider methods to improve the quality of papers submitted to dental journals and to gain further insights into the factors that are causing papers to be poorly written. There are a whole raft of reasons, which the speakers will be discussing, to help editors and publishers to work together to address these problems in the future. Lots of work to do in an hour and a half.

It now gives me great pleasure now to introduce our first speaker, Dr. Will Giannobile who, as you almost certainly know is the editor of the *Journal of Dental Research*. Will thank you so much for speaking today and over to you.

## Will Giannobile – the perspective of an Editor

Thank you very much, Ken. I would like to thank all of you for joining us today. I am highly appreciative of Ken for organising these workshops over the last couple of years. It seems like our attendance is growing by leaps and bounds each year. It is really beneficial for me as an editor and I think the other editors speaking today would probably say the same thing as we get so much out of these workshops particularly from the discussion that we have at the end. I think it is the most valuable part of the session. Ken has asked the speakers to look at opportunities and ways that we can improve the quality of manuscripts submitted to scientific journals and especially in Oral Health Sciences as well as to look at ways that we can work together. Given the composition of the audience I am going to give a very brief overview on a couple of items that I feel that are important and then I am hoping that as we have our question and answer session a little bit later. There will be an opportunity to delve into these and other issues at the end of the session. The speakers, who follow me, will go into some of these other areas in greater depth. I just wanted to highlight, as far as the *Journal of Dental Research* is concerned, our editors really do a lot of the heavy lifting for the journal and many of them are going to be at the IADR meeting. We are going to have an editorial board and reviewer reception at this meeting and so anyone who has served the journal is invited to meet with the editors and reviewers. I also wanted to recognise the IADR Global Headquarters office leadership in Chris Fox, Denise Streszoff, Kourtney Skinner and Lily Knol. They are highly involved in the day-to-day activities of the journal. From SAGE Publications, Courtney Pugh, Debbie Sourgen and Jennifer Stephenson are critical as our publishers of the JDR. Debbie will be speaking a little bit later this afternoon. I look forward to her presentation.

So let us start to think about and this is I think fairly much common sense, what is driving individuals to publish and how might this be important for editors, those of us submitting to scientific journals, and referees. We have a large number of

referees here in the audience. They are some of the driving forces as we look to support all our authors for publication. I think it is critically important because for every editor your major goal is to recruit the best papers you can possibly get to be submitted to the journal. There are really several key aspects, one which is to disseminate information to our fellow researchers, just like at this meeting in the general session presentations and finding ways to publish our information and get it accessible to the readership. Adding this new knowledge to the literature we are starting to see that it is not only limited to scientific journals. As one examines the impact of research now it is not only scientific journals, it's blogs, it's social media, it's news media and many other ways that information is disseminated, but it is really the peer review body of the scientific journals that provides that level of credibility. Meeting requirements for faculty promotion that Ken was just talking with me earlier examines the standards at many different universities. Oftentimes, it is looking at numbers and quality. One of the things that we really want to emphasise to editors is the quality of the papers and how impactful their work can be, versus institutions focusing on numbers of publications. I believe "numbers alone" creates problems within our system in terms of just focusing on quantity. Providing documentation for the next research programme is key, so these really work hand in hand – grants and publications. For those of us submitting for grants, we have to demonstrate that we can deliver on research by disseminating information. I think being able to assemble your project and get the results published, it is something that will be there for eternity in the published literature and it is very rewarding.

As I look at some of the goals that we have for the JDR, I would say that they really apply to all scientific journals. Within my role as an editor and also for the other editors is that the editorial rigour and the standards set by the journal are critically important to provide a clarity, a message that those who are submitting to the journal will have an understanding and view of the types of work that is going to be eventually accepted or viewed as high priority for the journal. Providing that clarity and emphasising the quality of the journal will really lead to the credibility of the journal itself, seeing a consistent message. We understand that the peer review process is imperfect. But it is something that we do our best as editors to try to create a consistent message. Then once we have that credibility within the journal itself it will build trust. For any scientific journal this is the critical component of all scientific journals that the readership will feel that trust to submit the work that there has been a large amount of dedicated efforts over the years that they will get a fair review. Not necessarily always agreeing with the outcome, but oftentimes, just understanding that there was a fair assessment of the work. So as I look at some of the goals for journal editors in recruiting the best, this has been a main goal for scientific journals to attract and publish the most outstanding papers relevant to all dental and cranial research as it relates to JDR and looking at the opportunities.

Certainly at this meeting, we have many other editorial board members for different journals and within that particular focus area all the editors are working diligently to recruit the best possible research and then looking to be

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