

Promoting integrity
in research reporting:
developing universal standards and
promoting best practice among journals

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Peer-reviewed journals

Part of the solution?

- Educating authors
- Policies acting as deterrents
- Screening for misconduct (plagiarism, redundant publication, falsification, fabrication)
- Retracting flawed work

Part of the problem?

- Reviewer misconduct (delay, bias, undisclosed conflicts of interest)
- Editor misconduct (bias, abuse of position, undisclosed conflicts of interest)
- Publisher / society problems (commercial, political, interference)

Elsevier published 6 fake journals

Posted by [Bob Grant](#)

[Entry posted at 7th May 2009 04:27 PM GMT]

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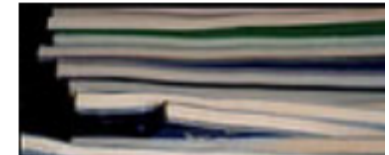
Science 22 December 1995:

A lawsuit, headed for trial in Seattle next year, centers on a claim that researchers at one company used confidential information from a paper one of the researchers reviewed for Nature in their own research.

Scientific publishing giant Elsevier put out a total of six publications between 2000 and 2005 that were sponsored by unnamed pharmaceutical companies and looked like peer reviewed medical journals, but did not disclose sponsorship, the company has admitted.

Elsevier is conducting an "internal review" of its publishing practices after allegations came to light that the company produced a pharmaceutical company-funded publication in the early 2000s without disclosing that the "journal" was corporate sponsored.

The allegations involve the *Australasian Journal of Bone and Joint Medicine*, a publication paid for by pharmaceutical company Merck that amounted to a compendium of reprinted scientific



Side Effects | Money, Medicine, and Patients

Journal editor gets royalties as articles favor devices

By [John Fauber](#) of the *Journal Sentinel*

Posted: Dec. 24, 2009

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In 2002, Thomas Zdeblick, a University of Wisconsin orthopedic surgeon who has pocketed millions of dollars in royalties from the spinal device maker Medtronic, took over as editor-in-chief of a medical journal about spinal disorders.

It would be the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

In the years to come, Zdeblick would receive more than \$20 million in patent royalties from Medtronic for spinal implants sold by the company. And the medical journal he edited would become a conduit for positive research articles involving Medtronic spinal products, a Journal Sentinel analysis found.

Zdeblick took over editorship of the Journal of Spinal Disorders &



Special considerations

- Most journal editors are part-time
- Editorial role is fitted around 'day job'
- Most editors receive little/no training
- Editors often feel isolated (unsure if they should divulge details)
- Peer reviewers are volunteers
- Journal ownership may be complex (academic society/ publisher)

Editors are often unaware of problems

- Survey of 231 editors
- Questioned about 16 ethical issues (redundancy, plagiarism, conflicts of interest, reviewer misconduct, authorship problems, etc.)
- >20% stated that >12/16 problems never occurred at their journal
- *Wager et al 2009; J Med Ethics* **35**:348-53

Promoting best practice

	Some organizations ...
COPE	Committee on Publication Ethics
WAME	World Association of Medical Editors
FAME	Forum of African Medical Editors
EMAME	East Mediterranean Association of Medical Editors
CSE	Council of Science Editors
EASE	European Association of Science Editors
ALPSP	Association of Learned & Professional Society Publishers
STM	Intl Assoc of Scientific, Technical & Medical Publishers

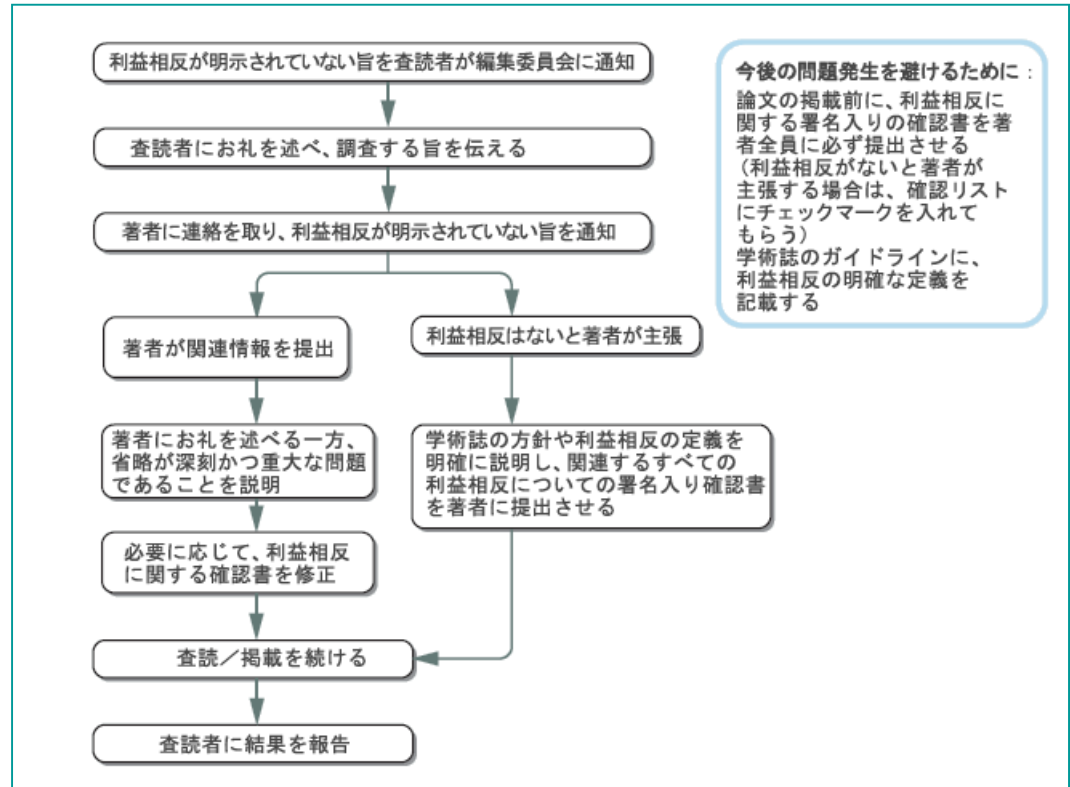
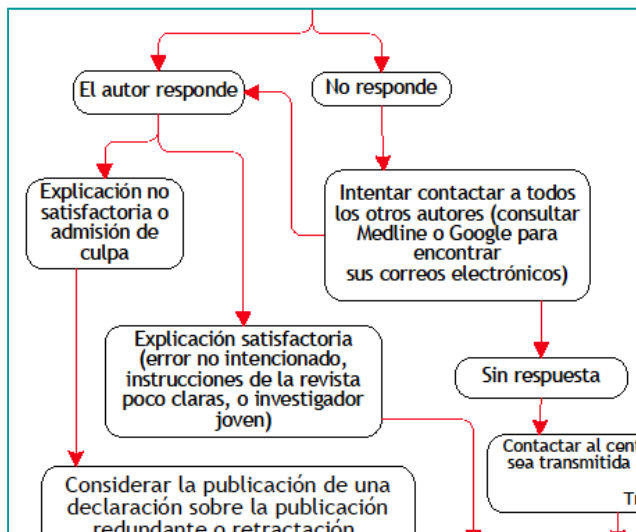
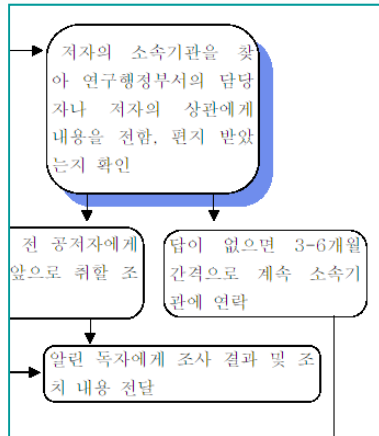
COPE

- Code of Conduct
- Best Practice
- Audit
- Flowcharts
- Other guidance (eg Retractions)
- Forum (Post-Conference meeting!)
- Seminars (UK and US)

COPE Code / Best Practice

- General duties & responsibilities
- Relations with
 - Readers
 - Authors
 - Reviewers
 - Editorial board members
 - Journal owners and publishers
- Conflict of Interest
- Encouraging academic integrity
- Pursuing misconduct

COPE flowcharts



COPE Forum

- Anonymised cases
- Quarterly meetings (in London)
- Informal advice from attendees (c40 editors) (editors can phone in)
- Cases entered into database (>300)

Overcomes:

- editorial isolation
- concern about sharing confidential details

Challenges

- Developing universal standards
 - across disciplines
 - across regions
- Using technology to allow faster response / create global Forum
- Lack of time (most editors are already doing two jobs!)

Positive developments

- Publishers keen to train editors
- ?May reduce liability / prevent problems
- COPE developing distance learning for editors
- Also cooperating with other organizations (STM, CSE, etc.)