



EDITORIAL

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The IJS and the COPE seminar 2006

In autumn 2005, the IJS joined the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and on Friday 10th March 2006, COPE held its Annual Seminar at BMA House in London with over 50 journal editors in attendance. This year's seminar took an international perspective and addressed research and publication ethics in a number of European countries and beyond, using interactive workshops on common ethical dilemmas. These workshops were particularly useful as they brought editors from diverse publishing backgrounds into small groups to discuss selected ethical quagmires. The ensuing discussions were intriguing and demonstrated the differences of opinion amongst the editors even within COPE. The morning also saw a plenary session by David Katz and David Morton, on what

journal editors should consider before they publish studies involving animal research. What sort of ethical standards and protocols should we expect? This was especially pertinent to the IJS as 50% of all the manuscripts we receive are original research and many of these studies do involve animals.

The afternoon saw a lively debate erupt around the motion: "impact factors – their massaging by journal editors is wrong", with Pritpal Tamber from the BMJ arguing *for* the motion and Tim Albert from Tim Albert Training arguing *against*. This debate was highly charged and a number of useful discussion points were raised by both sides. The most interesting observation was the sheer number of editors who were frantically scribbling down all the tactics that one can use to boost

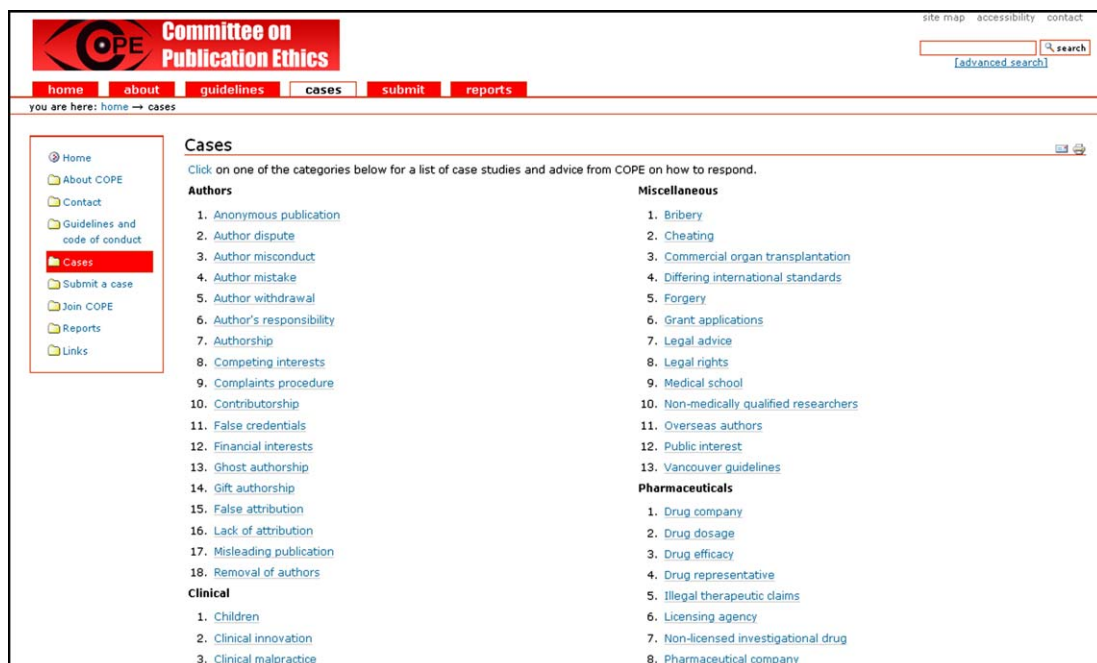


Figure 1 The COPE website (www.publicationethics.org.uk), a useful resource for editors on the frontline.



Figure 2 From left; Sabine Kleiner (COPE Secretary), Harvey Marcovitch (COPE President) and Riaz Agha (IJS Managing and Executive Editor).

a journal's impact factor as the debate ensued (not this one of course).

Next was a real time showcase of the COPE website (Fig. 1 below) by newly elected COPE President Harvey Marcovitch (pictured Fig. 2).

The COPE website is a useful resource for all the editors, especially the "cases" section which runs through real life ethical dilemmas such as conflicts of interest, duplicate submission and fraud and provides advice and discussion points on how to deal with them.

The final part of the day saw Mathew Cockerill from Biomed Central talk about new indexing services such as Scopus, Google Scholar and Citebase as well as sites using opinion-based metrics such as citeulike.org and postgenomic.com. We advise readers to investigate these new services for themselves, but we will be discussing them in detail in an upcoming article on useful online resources for surgeons. In the mean time, please e-mail your most useful website links to editor@journal-surgery.com, we would greatly appreciate your input. So what exactly do I take away from this year's COPE Seminar? The need to continually strengthen and develop our system of peer-review and publishing ethics, to refer to the COPE website when appropriate and to stay up-to-date with the latest e-developments in medical publishing.

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