



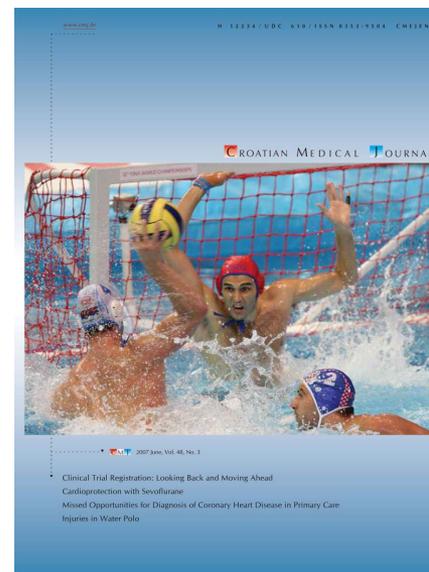
ESF-ORI First World Conference on Research Integrity: Fostering Responsible Research

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Track 3 – Publication Session 3 – Small Journals

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Why are scientific journals, small or large, important in fostering research integrity?

Central role in the discovery of research misconduct:

“Most of the allegations and findings center upon publication issues, because scientific publication documents the actions of the researcher.”

Claxton LD. Scientific authorship. Part 1. A window into scientific fraud? *Mutat Res* 2005;589:17-30.

Small journals - definition

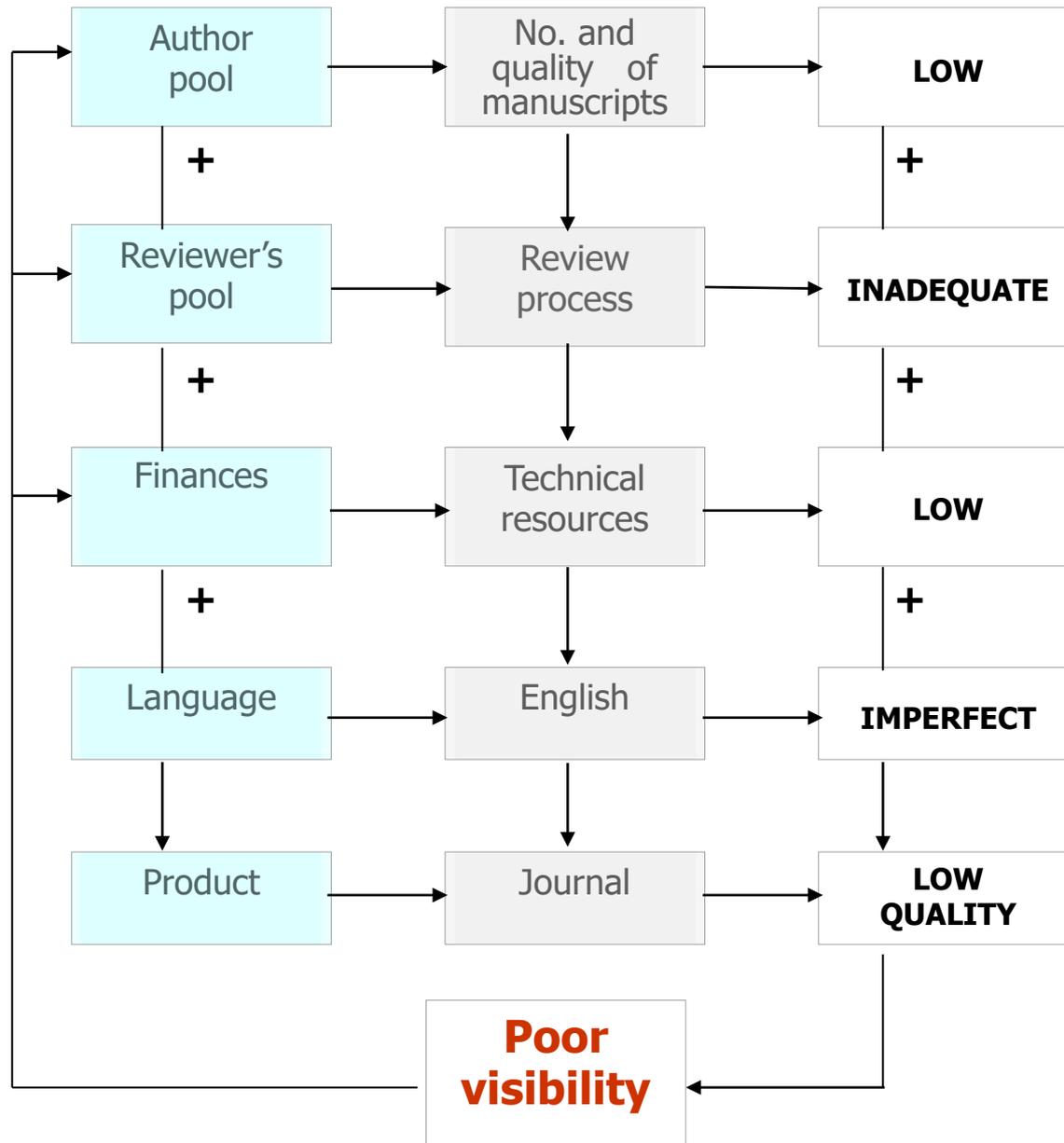
- Usually academic and scholarly journals, where the editorial position is not a full-time position.
- Published in small scientific communities – the so-called **scientific periphery**, characterized by:
 - smallness of the research community,
 - lack of financial support,
 - language barrier.

Small journals - definition

Peripheral position to the mainstream science:

- US National Library of Medicine receives more than 16,000 journals and indexes only 4,000 in MEDLINE.
- 90% of relevant information is published in 10% of the journals.
- Science Citation Index indexes less than 2% of journals from developing countries.
- Developing countries encompass ~24% of the world's scientists but receive only ~ 5% of global research spending.

Small journals – vicious circle of inadequacy



Small journals – vicious circle of publication corruption

Authors and academic community:

Poor research
Low criteria
Powerful positions
Nepotism

Visibility of misconduct:

Lack of competent readers
No bibliographical indexing
No web visibility

Editors:

Volunteer position
No training
Low criteria
Lack of professional staff

Peer review:

Lack of competent researchers
Inadequate statistical review
Questionable ethics
Pressures from authors



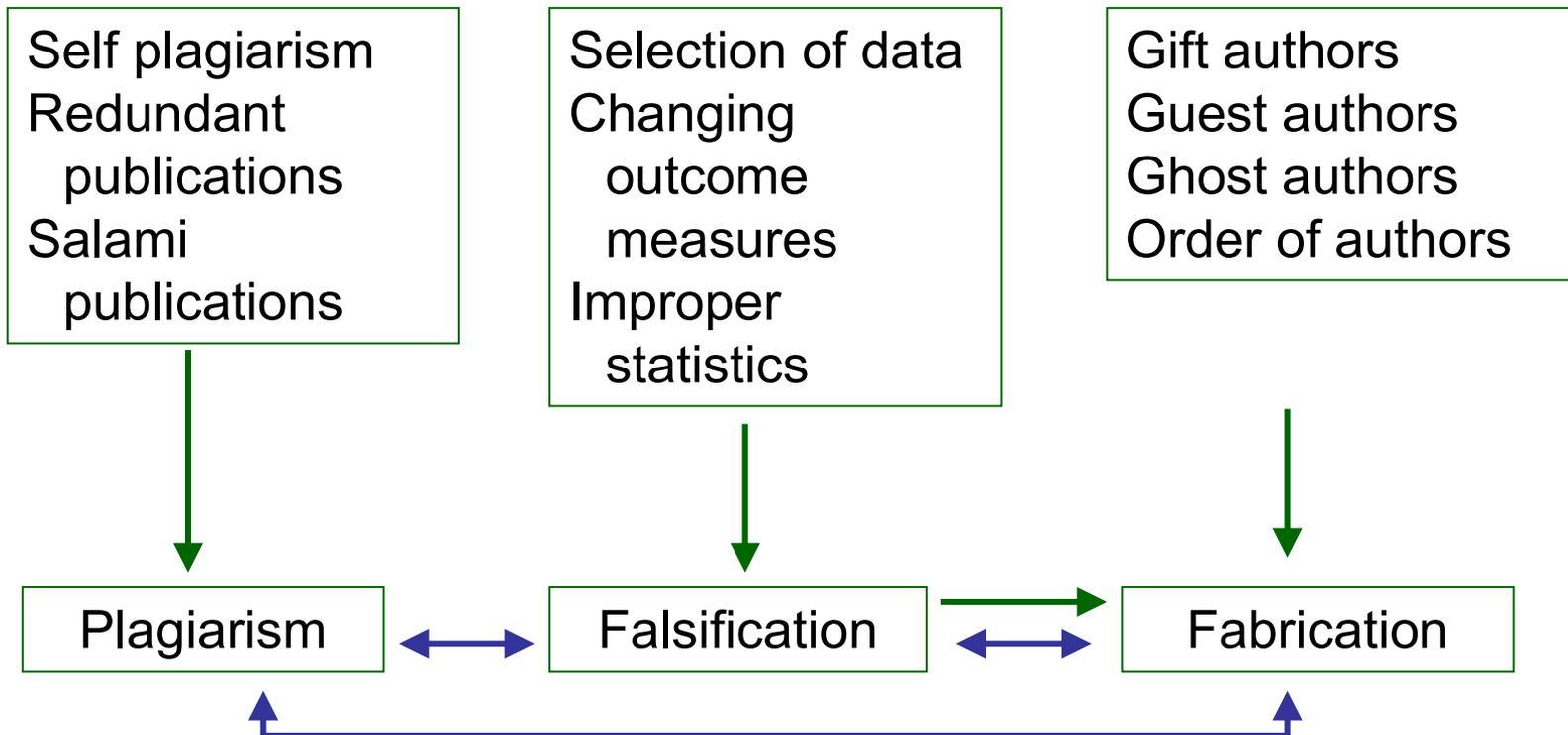
Vicious circle creates an environment of “research corruption”:

In a vicious circle, which supports weak science and inadequate researchers, small journals can often have a negative influence on local scientific community – its criteria, teaching, communication, and scientific output.



Small journals and “research corruption”:

- The problems of small academic communities is not FFP but high prevalence of irresponsible research practices:



Small journals and “research corruption”:

- Weak publishing criteria result in low quality publications, but they are still recognized and valued as acceptable scientific research and counted for research and academic advancement.

Such publication practices foster research corruption and not research integrity.



Small journals and “research corruption”:

- By publishing mostly in local journals, the researchers fail to perceive the incentives for improvement and for testing their research in the global community.
- Finally, they become a powerful obstacle for introducing international criteria in research, because they promote weak criteria.

Small journals and “research corruption”:

- Once poor publications in local journals become the key criterion of (local) scientific and academic recognition, these journals become important to authors, journal editors, publishers, and owners.
- They build up a closed system of private interests, academic and political influence, nepotism, and no responsibility for the public interest.



Editors of small journals and research integrity issues:

In small journals, the weaknesses and external threats to the job outweigh their strengths and opportunities provided by the global editorial community.



SWOT analysis of editorial activities in research integrity issues:

STRENGTHS

WEAKNESSES

internal resources
and capabilities



OPPORTUNITIES

THREATS

factors **external** to
the organization or
group



Marušić A, Katavić V, Marušić M. Role of Editors and Journals in Detecting and Preventing Scientific Misconduct: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.

Medicine and Law – theme issue, in press

STRENGTHS of editors in promoting research integrity:

- Authority in the scientific community
- Editorial independence
- Expertise in research integrity issues
- Responsibility for the integrity of published records
- Power to formulate and implement editorial policies





OPPORTUNITIES for editors to promote research integrity:

- Editors well positioned to detect scientific misconduct
- Availability of new technologies for detecting misconduct
- Editorial policies developed by editorial organizations
- Policies developed by national ethics/integrity bodies
- Greater transparency of publications and literature corrections on the web

STRENGTHS: Editorial policies



Council of Science Editors

www.councilscienceeditors.org



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF SCIENCE EDITORS

www.ease.org.uk

ICMJE

International Committee of Medical Journal Editors

www.icmje.org



World
Association of
Medical
Editors

www.wame.org



Committee on
Publication Ethics

www.publicationethics.org.uk



CSE's White Paper on Promoting Integrity in
Scientific Journal Publications

EASE Science Editors' Handbook – Ethical issues

ICMJE Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts
Submitted to Biomedical Journals: Writing and
Editing for Biomedical Publication

WAME Policy Statement on the Responsibilities of
Medical Editors

COPE Guidelines on Good Publication and the
Code of Conduct

WEAKNESSES of editors in promoting research integrity:

- No mandate for legal actions
- Few means of action: expression of concern and retraction
- Reluctance to get involved in delicate issues
- Possible damage to journal's reputation
- Lack of education and staff to implement adequate procedures

WEAKNESSES: experiences of editors

Smith R. Investigating the previous studies of a fraudulent author. *BMJ* 2005; 331:288-291.

White C. Suspected research fraud: difficulties of getting at the truth. *BMJ* 2005;331:281-288.

Sox H, Rennie D. Research misconduct, retraction, and cleansing the medical literature: lessons from the Poehlman case. *Ann Intern Med.* 2006;144:609-613.

Katavic V. Five-year report of Croatian Medical Journal's Research Integrity Editor – policy, policing, or policing policy. *Croat Med J* 2006;47:220-227.

THREATS to editors promoting research integrity:

- Lack of legal regulation and culture of research integrity in the scientific community
- Corruption of the scientific community and governments
- No training available
- Lack of support from stakeholders in scientific publishing (publishers, associations, scientists, academic and scientific community)
- Pressures on editors and journal (publishers, financial conflict of interest)



What should editors of small journals do to promote research integrity in their scientific communities?

Learn

Be informed

Teach

Marusic M, Marusic A. Good editorial practice: editors as educators. *Croat Med J* 2001;42:113-20.

Gollogly L, Momen H. Ethical dilemmas in scientific publication: pitfalls and solutions for editors. *Rev Saude Publica* 2006;40 (Spec no.):24-9.

What should editors of small journals do to promote research integrity in their scientific communities?

If journals and their editors are placed well to detect scientific misconduct, they are also well placed to prevent misconduct.

Quality management principles:

Structure:

Guidelines
RI editor
Editorial
organizations



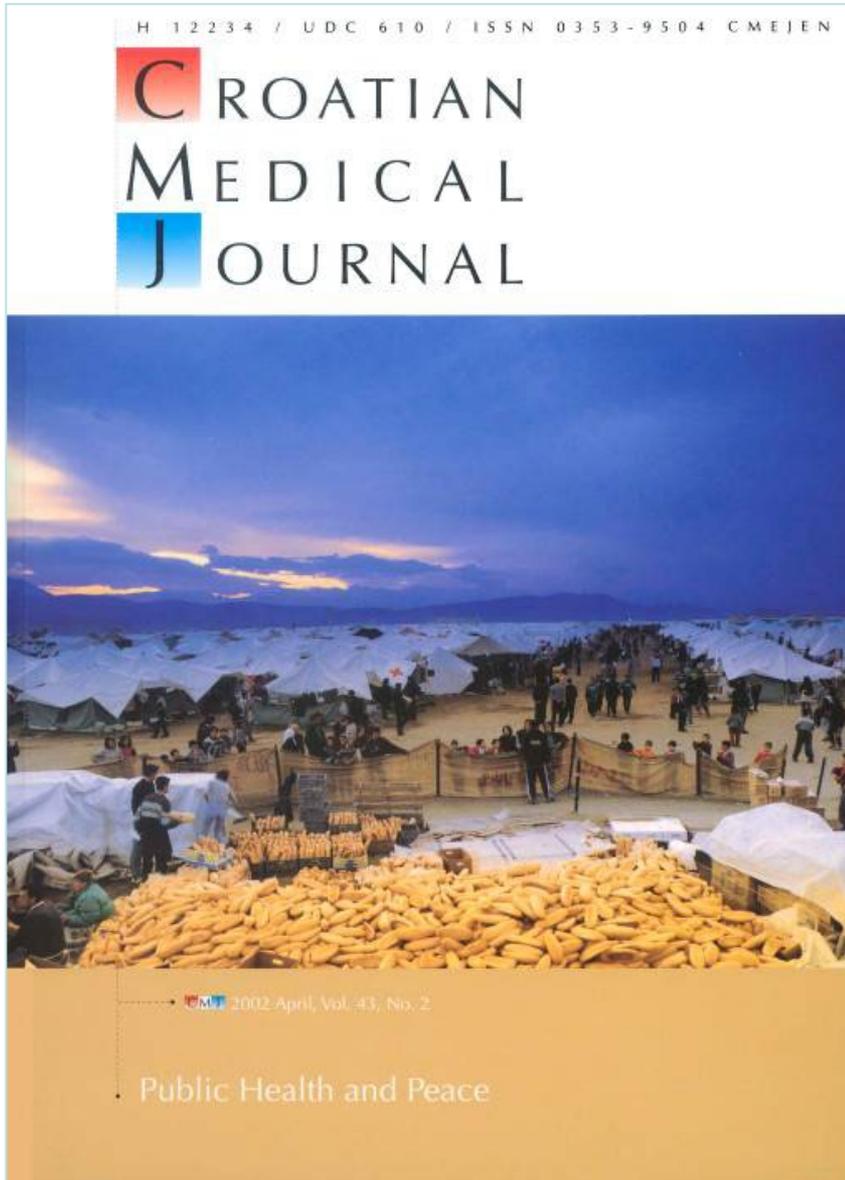
Process:

Research in
journal
Education in
community



Outcome:

Less research
misconduct
? How to
measure ?



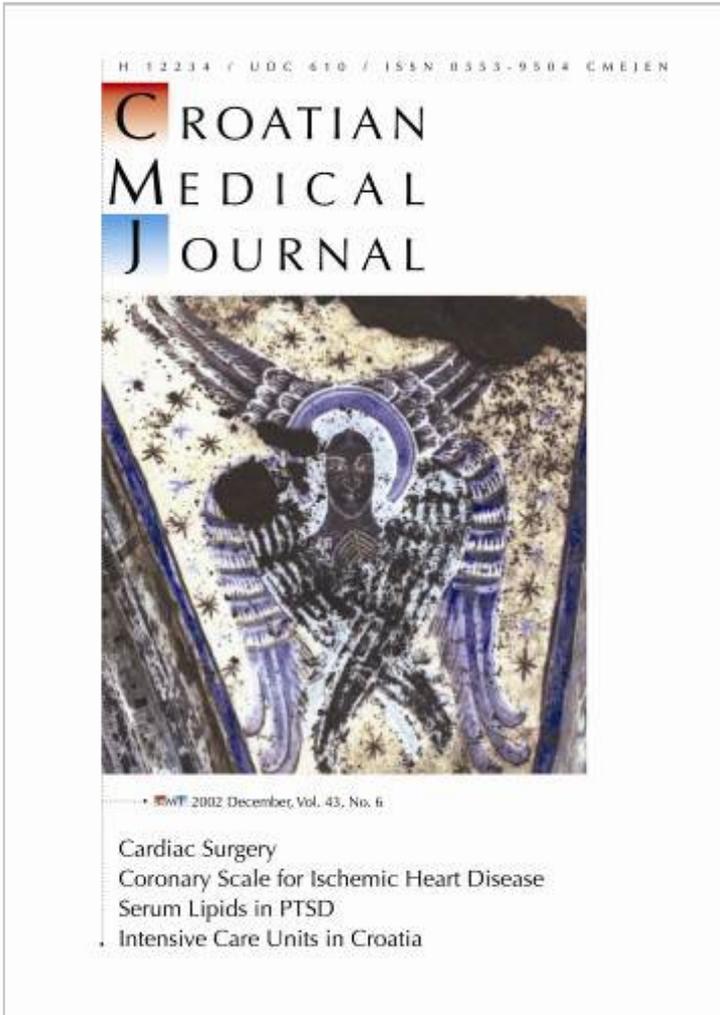
Public health approach to work with authors:

“The community presents a natural work setting for an editor, not the laboratories or surgeries. The editor is a community worker and a teacher.”

Editors as educators:

Since, both in importance and in time,
health precedes disease,
so we ought to consider first
how health may be preserved,
and then how one
may best cure disease.

Galen, AD 130–200



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