Doing The Right Thing
(Or, Can We Decouple Correcting The Record from Punishment?)

WCRI

May 29, 2017

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Retraction Watch

The Retraction Penalty: Evidence from the Web of Science

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Scientific articles are retracted at increasing rates, with the highest rates among top journals. Here we show that a single retraction triggers citation losses through an author's prior body of work. Compared to closely-matched control papers, citations fall by an average of 6.9% per year for each prior publication. These chain reactions are sustained on authors' papers (a) published up to a decade earlier and (b) connected within the authors' own citation network by up to 4 degrees of separation from the retracted publication. Importantly, however, citation losses among prior work disappear when authors self-report the error. Our analyses and results span the range of scientific disciplines.

Retraction Watch

What do you do after painful retractions? Q&A with Pamela Ronald and Benjamin Schwessinger

with 3 comments

2013 was a rough year for biologist Pamela Ronald. After discovering the protein that appears to trigger rice's immune system to fend off a common bacterial disease – suggesting a new way to engineer disease–resistant crops – she and her team had to retract two papers in 2013 after they were unable to replicate their findings. The culprits: a mislabeled bacterial strain and a highly variable assay. However, the care and transparency she exhibited earned her a "doing the right thing" nod from us at the time.

After many months spent understanding what went wrong and redoing the experiments correctly, today Ronald and her team release another paper in Science Advances that reveals the protein they thought they had identified in 2013.

Ronald and co–first author Benjamin Schwessinger (who recently became an independent research fellow at the Australian National University in Canberra)

Pamela Ronald and Benjamin Schwessinger, wearing the shirts of a swim competition they entered

This company admitted failure — and the stock market rewarded it

By IVAN ORANSKY @ivanoransky *and* ADAM MARCUS @armarcus / MAY 23, 2017

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A Reward