The Retraction of Published Research

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Agenda

Overview of Retracted Articles
Consequences of Flawed Studies and Misleading Information
Strategies for Increasing Student Awareness
Research findings disseminated in the scientific literature help people make informed decisions.

Yet, the number of retracted publications continues to rise (Vuong, 2020).

This underscores the need for more transparency in research and publication practices.

What is a Retraction?

- Even when a journal has a peer review process in place, issues may be identified post-publication.
- These concerns can lead to an article being investigated and retracted.
- Purpose of a retraction is to correct the literature and to ensure scientific integrity (COPE, 2019).
Scholarly Publishing Ethics

• International guidelines for journal editors on how to handle retractions are provided by various groups, including:
  ❖ Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE, 2019)
  ❖ International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE, 2020)

Reasons for Retracted Articles

ETHICAL MISCONDUCT  SCIENTIFIC ERRORS  PUBLISHER ISSUES
Wakefield et al. (1998)

- Study led to widespread confusion and *vaccination skepticism* especially among parents and caregivers.
- Study was investigated and retracted by publisher in 2010.
- Flawed studies and *misinformation* can have important public health consequences.

Retraction Notice


Ileal-lymphoid-nodular hyperplasia, non-specific colitis, and pervasive developmental disorder in children

Consequences

- Flawed and fabricated studies can be **misleading**.

- Misinformation can result in confusion, anxiety, and mistrust.

- Lead to avoidance or delay of timely vaccinations.

- Also, an opportunity to learn and improve research studies.
Locating Other Examples

Search Electronic Databases

Retraction Watch

Student-Centered Strategies

FOR INCREASING RETRACTION AWARENESS
Recommendations

Educate students about scholarly publishing processes, including retractions:

- **Incorporate retractions** into instruction, suitable for all student audiences, and all disciplines.
- Use examples to highlight plagiarism, research ethics, misconduct, data literacy, errors, scientific integrity, etc.
- Discuss the limits of the peer review process.
- Evaluate research studies through a critical lens (study designs, levels of evidence).

(Thielen, 2018)

Recommendations

Build student searching skills across platforms:

- Illustrate the variability in how retracted articles and retraction notices are represented in databases.
- Demonstrate the lack of full adherence to guidelines.
- Discuss challenges in discovering the retracted status of an article.
- Examine **accessibility** and **visibility** of retracted publications.
Summary

- Retracted articles highlight issues of ethical misconduct and scientific errors.

- Publishing guidance available for reporting retractions.

- Flawed studies, unreliable conclusions, and misinformation have consequences.

- Importance of educating students about retraced articles.

Resources

- Examples of publishing guidelines:
  - Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) [publicationethics.org/node/19896](http://publicationethics.org/node/19896)
  - International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) [www.icmje.org/journals-following-the-icmje-recommendations](http://www.icmje.org/journals-following-the-icmje-recommendations)

- Consult your librarian liaison colleagues

- Check LibGuides for database search strategies, publication filters, etc.

- Retraction Watch [retractionwatch.com](http://retractionwatch.com)
References


Thank you!

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