Reviewer's report

Title: Recent trends in publication of basic science and clinical research by United States investigators in anesthesia journals

Version: 1 Date: 6 February 2012

Reviewer: Iain Moppett

Reviewer's report:

The authors have produced a bibliographic analysis of publication output from American academic anaesthesiology departments.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1 Please clarify why meta-analyses were excluded. Most authorities consider them to be research in their own right.

2 The paper is difficult to interpret without knowing where else the US authors were sending their work. Any changes may (or may not) have been the consequence of changes in type of research. The most highly cited papers in the filed as a whole are critical care and pain (A bibliometric search of citation classics in anesthesiology, Tripathi BMC anesthesiology), so the savvy research department will have switched to these fields. I appreciate that the authors have done a good job at making their data comparable to other studies.

Minor Essential Revisions

3 Could the authors take care over the use of the term productivity for at least two reasons. First, publications are not the only 'product' of an academic. Second, (of particular relevance to the background), a decrease in publication proportion by the US may have nothing at all to do with the US - the rest of the world may have 'improved', the journals may have made a conscious (or unconscious) decision to publish more internationally etc.

Discretionary Revisions

4 Please be careful about what you interpret from the association between journal IF and American authorship. I am not clear from the methods whether the 2010 IF was used for the correlation or whether individual years were used. BJA swapped places with A&A a few years ago as the number 2. This may have influenced the way authors submittted papers. I appreciate that the issue gets muddied by the chicken and egg problem. Does IF lead submissions or vice versa.

5 The authors may wish to comment on the context of their data with reference to other recently published work. There has been a fair amount published in the last year or so: Bould, Moppett, various papers by the authors themselves, Tripathi.
6 It is a minor point, but what have the authors done with researchers who have moved? The UK has benefitted from Irene Tracey and Tim Hales and I am sure mainland Europe has had similar moves.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I have published in this field, and I have reviewed papers by the authors before (not this one).

I am an editorial board member of the BJA