Reviewer’s report

Title: RePAIR Consensus Guidelines  Responsibilities of Publishers, Agencies, Institutions, and Researchers in Protecting the Integrity of the Research Record

Version: 0 Date: 21 May 2018

Reviewer: Zoe Hammatt

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Although the topic is of interest, as written, these consensus guidelines are both too broad and general in most sections and too specific in others for feasible implementation in diverse contexts. The Singapore Statement is referenced, but it is not clear how this advances the field beyond the Singapore Statement and other referenced guidelines. Consider using an approach more similar to the Singapore Statement (e.g., point 12 notes that each stakeholder "should have procedures for responding to allegations...") for the general responsibilities (without dictating what those procedures should be). If the authors wish to make more specific recommendations on procedural aspects, extension beyond existing procedural guidelines (e.g., COPE and CLUE) would be necessary. Such extension would require research/literature review, additional consultation to ensure feasibility, and a clear focus.

On technical points, consultation with experienced Research Integrity Officers, legal counsel, editors/publishers, and researchers could offer clarification/refinement. For example,

"Research Integrity Officers [should] ... ensure accurate reporting of data in submitted manuscripts" is one of several impractical recommendations, since no one individual can ensure accuracy in all manuscripts submitted by each member of an institution. Other points needing refinement/expert consultation include the following examples:

Point 9. Researchers [should] "provide primary data and documentation on request" (to whom, in what context?)

Point 1. Institutions [should] "provide findings upon request from investigations" (in what form? to whom?)

Point 3. Publishers/Editors [should] "examine suspicions [first with the author]" (may pose problems with data sequestration/evidence review in certain legal contexts).

There is no description of the methodology. It would help to articulate the process for selecting working group members and agreeing upon the guidelines, along with a bit of background about the conference in which the working group convened.

In the absence of data to support their effectiveness, the "best practices" appear to be more anecdotal. Many "responsibilities" delineated (e.g., for agencies) are vague and quite U.S.-centric. It is not clear what is meant by "harmonization" and how that would be desirable (or
feasible) in this context involving multiple stakeholders with diverse roles and functions. Using consistent terms would provide focus and delineation between guidelines, responsibilities and recommendations, for example.

It does not appear that a systematic literature review was done, as several references are quite dated in spite of more current available references. There are several typographical and spelling errors.

The manuscript would be significantly strengthened if practical recommendations could be articulated in connection with currently vague statements (e.g., "protect whistleblowers"). These recommendations would need to be based on demonstrated effectiveness (at least in some settings/circumstances) and properly vetted and refined. They would need to be described in sufficient detail so as to also be practical and feasible (if possible with relevance to diverse jurisdictions). In the absence of clarity and precision, as written, these guidelines do not advance the field beyond the Singapore Statement and other existing recommendations related to specific stakeholders in the research enterprise.

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An article of limited interest

**Quality of written English**
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Needs some language corrections before being published

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I oversaw the program through which corresponding author served as PI on the grant awarded by the US Office of Research Integrity (ORI) for this conference (I did not attend), and we communicated about procedural aspects. ORI's then director hired Dr. Pimple on a contract during my tenure at ORI.

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