



What type of clinical research do we need and the articles we want to publish in EJOI

Systematic reviews and consensus conferences frequently conclude the same way: More and better research is needed.

How can this be possible if the world is flooded by scientific publications that only very few people have sufficient time to read? Exactly the same phenomenon is observed globally in all fields of science, but there appear to be some contradictions.

I wish to resuscitate the concept so elegantly expressed by Dr Altman in a famous editorial a few years ago: *The scandal of poor medical research* (BMJ 1994;308:283; <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.308.6924.283>). Dr Altman started his editorial with the following words: "We need less research, better research, and research done for the right reasons." I completely share his views and, in my opinion, little has changed in recent years.

EJOI receives many systematic review manuscripts, and I am personally invited to attend a large number of consensus conferences. Both systematic reviews and consensus conferences are almost "systematically" characterised by an inability to provide meaningful and reliable evidence-based answers to solve our clinical problems. In an attempt to fill these "systematic" reviews with data and to fuel the discussion in consensus conferences, it seems that any type of "research" is considered, regardless of quality and reliability. This somewhat naive and superficial approach favours the creation of results and conclusions that can be so unbelievable that they generate disorientation among participants. When something goes against our beliefs we tend to disregard and bury such findings to avoid further

discussion. At this point, the opinions of the most authoritative and respected opinion leaders replace this lack of scientific evidence by providing reassuring answers.

When discussing the issue of research reliability, many authors, without giving sufficient weight to the research methodology, seem to be naively convinced that something good could be extracted from any published report. We all know the reality is different. If the concept that research has to be properly planned, conducted and reported one day becomes widely accepted and implemented, maybe then we shall finally welcome more useful dental research.

Where does the problem lie? In my opinion, one issue is that many authors do not carry out research for the right reasons – but rather to obtain an academic promotion, to show their colleagues how good they are, or to promote a given product for a given brand. In an ideal world, clinical research should mainly be aimed at finding solutions to clinical problems. What we actually need is to know the best diagnostic tests and the most effective therapeutic interventions for our patients.

Our point of view is this: We do not need more systematic reviews or more consensus conferences, we just need a few more clinical trials that are properly conducted and answer significant, clinical questions. With this mixed idealistic and pragmatic approach, EJOI wishes to prioritise and publish this type of research over other types.

Happy reading
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