Committee Review of Stem-Cell Fraud Finds Editors Followed All Rules, But Urges Revisions of Trust-Based Journal Publishing

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[正文] 20 November 2006. - In handling foundation-area cell research articles, journal editors were above and beyond existing procedures to try and verify the findings, but in today's competitive publishing environment, more stringent, less trusting safeguards are now essential, an independent committee has concluded.
[关键词] [Stem Cell][publishing]

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cell research articles, journal editors were above and beyond existing procedures to try and verify the findings, but in today's competitive publishing environment, more stringent, less trusting safeguards are now essential, an independent committee has concluded.

Although editors at the journal Science "made a serious effort,...

substantially greater than that for most papers" to scientists research submitted by Woo Suk Hwang, the committee found, "the cachet of publishing in Science can be an incentive not to follow the rules."

The journal's current procedures, based on an assumption of trust (vis-the basic integrity of the vast majority of researchers, must be revised to acknowledge the risk of mistinating, disowned, or fraudulent findings, the committee concluded.

The six-person committee - including leading stem-cell researchers, three members of Science's Senior Editorial Board, and an editor from Nature -.

evaluated the handling of two research articles by Hwang and colleagues:

"Evidence of a Pluripotent Human Embryonic Stem Cell Line Derived from a Cloned Blastocyst" (12 February 2004, Science Express; 12 March 2004, Science); and

"Pation-Specific Embryonic Stem Cells Derived from Human SCNT Blastocysts" (19 May 2005, Science Express; 17 June 2005, Science).

After examining the original submissions, reviews, revisions, commenta, editors' notes, and additional information related to both foundation papers, the committee proposed the development of a procedure for identifying "high

,risk" papers. Research in the high-risk category might include, for example, cosmo-

tmatics findings, and research likely to generate intense media or political interest. High,

risk submissions should then be subjected to an additional level of scrutiny, such as more comprehensive access to primary data, the committee said.

Even so, the committee emphasized: "No matter are of procedures can be completely immune to deliberate fraud." Science Editor-in,

Chief Donald Kennedy commented the committee's evaluation. "We are committed to accepting the major findings of the report, and to making our ieiw procedures clear to authors, reviewers, and readers as they are developed." Kennedy said in an editorial response scheduled to appear in the 1 December issue of Science: "In responding to the recommendations, we are now meeting to develop criteria for the 'risk assessment' template described in the Report which should allow us to apply especially stringent attention as needed." In the future, he explained, "Authors may be asked to ch

Kennedy noted further that implementing more stringent safeguards will significantly change the traditionally collegial nature of scholarly publishing, as editors are required to make more demands of potential authors.

"Clearly, we're moving into a new world in which public trust in the scientific enterprise has been a very serious casualty," Kennedy said in an interview. "There are many more incentiv-es today for over

,claiming results, so even the faiv[lying results, and scientific publishers therefore must develop more stringent new -tick.

assessment procedures for further scrutinizing high,

risk papers. We are in complete agreement with the committee on this point, and we will take steps to comply promptly with the committee's recommendations."

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