

Peer Review File

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Reviewer A

Great editorial on article retraction during COVID-19 pandemic.

- **We are thankful for these valuable comments on our work. No further action is needed.**

Reviewer B

I think this is an interesting text that deserves publication. I observed a redundant information in the sentence line 53. It is okay, but might be dropped.

- **ANSWER. Thanks for raising this issue. Redundant information in line 53 has been eliminated.**

I am myself the subject of 2 retractions. Both of my retracted papers were technically sound, which is testified by the fact that they were republished after extensive further peer review by other journals that were notified about the history. The retractions were very likely due to political reasons. Thus, the retraction policies during the covid19 pandemic were not only due to faulty or rapid and shabby peer review, but in many cases which I observed due to unwanted results that ran contrary to the mainstream narrative. Since never before have disease situations been so politicized, retractions were also used as instruments of political mainstreaming and censorship. This fact deserves, I think, a note. See the freely available text: Walach, H., & Klement, R. J. (2024). Medicine, Money, and Media: A Case Study of How the Covid-19 Crisis Corrupts Disclosure and Publishing Ethics. *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, 38(1), 122-137. doi:10.31275/20243249

- **ANSWER. Great point, thanks. We fully agree. The conclusions of the article have been modified to include this interesting point and the pertinent reference suggested by the Referee, as follows: “The retraction of articles only tells part of the story, as some retracted articles may have been technically sound, as evidenced by the fact that they were republished after extensive further peer-review by other journals that were informed of the retraction. The retraction policy during the COVID-19 pandemic could therefore not only be due to flawed or rapid and inaccurate peer-review, but also to unexpected or even undesirable results that ran counter to the mainstream narrative and were ultimately justified by political mainstreaming and censorship”. New reference: Walach H, Klement RJ. Medicine, Money, and Media: A Case Study of How the Covid-19 Crisis Corrupts Disclosure and Publishing Ethics. *J Sci Explor* 2024;38(1):122-37.**

Reviewer C

L18-20 requires referencing

- **ANSWER.** New reference added [#2: Anderson C, Nugent K, Peterson C. Academic Journal Retractions and the COVID-19 Pandemic. J Prim Care Community Health 2021;12:21501327211015592].

L20-23 requires referencing.

- **ANSWER.** The reference is already present at the end of the paragraph (New reference #4).

The introduction requires further justification to form the foundation for arguments later in this paper. Further, the argument is not clear if the expedited publishing process was solely for Covid19 related papers or a wider range of pathologies.

- **ANSWER.** We disagree. This introduction is already clear for the scope of an Editorial. This is not a review article and it is useless to add further words that are very clearly explained below.

Currently, this introduction lacks referencing and convincing explanation; I have particular concerns regarding this claim: " increasing availability of open access resources" affecting the reliability of information and data ("reliability of scientific information published during the pandemic").

- **ANSWER.** The fact that an increase availability of open access resources may have undermined the accuracy of some article is well established. There dozen on citations on this matter. We have just listed one in *Scientometrics*, one the most eminent journal about scientific publishing: “Nane GF, Robinson-Garcia N, van Schalkwyk F, Torres-Salinas D. COVID-19 and the scientific publishing system: growth, open access and scientific fields. *Scientometrics*. 2023;128(1):345-362. doi: 10.1007/s11192-022-04536-x. Epub 2022 Oct 10. PMID: 36246788; PMCID: PMC9548429.”.

It would be interesting and potentially offer further evidence of the potential issues regarding expedited publishing during pandemic eras to provide a supplementary data table and analysis of correlation between publishing year and retraction year.

- **ANSWER.** Done, as follows: “No significant Spearman’s correlation was found between the publication year and COVID-19 ($r= 0.712$; $p=0.172$) or SARS-CoV-2 ($r= -0.300$; $p=0.624$)”. It is unfeasible to add additional table or figures since this is not compatible with the instruction to authors and results about COVID-19 and SARS-CoV-2 have been presented above.

Please clarify if figure 1 refers to total publications retracted from January 2020 to July 2024.

- **ANSWER.** Done.