

## Retraction of Manikantan K, Dwivedi RC, Sayed SI, Pathak KA, Kazi R. Current concepts of surveillance and its significance in head and neck cancer.

Recently the Editor received an enquiry from a reader concerning a paper published in the November 2011 issue of the *Annals*.<sup>1</sup> This noted extensive similarities between the *Annals* paper and a publication by the same authors in 2009.<sup>2</sup> The abstracts of the two papers are almost identical, the work reported concerns the same group of patients seen in an identical time period, many sections of the text are closely similar or identical, and several tables contain the same information, albeit sometimes in a different order.

The submitting author and the last named author of the *Annals* paper were asked to comment on these facts. A reply was received from a third author, named first on the *Annals* paper. This was unconvincing. The reply included these statements: *'The article published previously in the Cancer Treatment Reviews was an extensive review which addressed all aspects of surveillance under two broad headings of "when to follow up" and "what to follow up" and also had a detailed discussion on the recommendations. Whereas the study we published in the Annals reviewed articles on specific aspects of surveillance such as timing of visits, imaging and endoscopy alone. The article as such is not a word to word [sic] reprint and so the question of dual publication is contested [...] We are however keen to address the issues raised and we would like to update the article accordingly.'*

*'We would also like to apologise as the article was submitted without the clear knowledge of the senior author Mr Rehan Kazi and he has expressed his desire to be withdrawn from the list of authors.'*

In our view, this constitutes dual or redundant publication. The similarities are too great to allow any other interpretation. The second (*Annals*) paper makes no reference to the earlier publication and if the Editor had been aware of the first publication, he would not have accepted the work for publication in the *Annals*.

The authors' response raises two other issues. It is naive to suggest that these issues can be dealt with after publication. Publication defines the final version of a paper and later changes are not possible. More worrying, the last named author of the *Annals* paper was named as corresponding author but he was not made aware of the submission. Criteria for authorship are well known<sup>3</sup> and include formal agreement to submission of the final text by all authors. We are currently reviewing our submission requirements to strengthen this aspect of submission.

The *Annals* subscribes to the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and strives to maintain the highest standards of practice. Contributors will be aware that we have recently begun to use the CrossCheck service, which has the power to detect dual or redundant publication and plagiarism (unfortunately too late to detect in this case).

The recent publication in the *Annals*<sup>1</sup> has now been retracted. We regret the time and effort wasted in this matter by our reviewers and staff, and the lost opportunity to publish another paper in the space taken by this submission.

1. Manikantan K, Dwivedi RC, Sayed SI, Pathak KA, Kazi R. Current concepts of surveillance and its significance in head and neck cancer. *Ann R Coll Surg Engl* 2011; **93**: 576–582. <http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/rscs/arcs/2011/00000093/00000008/art00003> (cited March 2012).
2. Manikantan K, Khode S, Dwivedi RC *et al.* Making sense of post-treatment surveillance in head and neck cancer: when and what of follow-up. *Cancer Treat Rev* 2009; **35**: 744–753.
3. International Committee of Medical Journal Editors. Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals: Ethical Considerations in the Conduct and Reporting of Research: Authorship and Contributorship. [http://www.icmje.org/ethical\\_1author.html](http://www.icmje.org/ethical_1author.html) (cited March 2012).

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