

Facts in scientific drug literature may not be, study finds

May 30 2012

(Medical Xpress) -- A growing concern with fraud and misconduct in published drug studies has led researchers at the University of Illinois at Chicago's Center for Pharmacoeconomic Research to investigate the extent and reasons for retractions in the research.

"We were surprised to find the proportion of retractions due to [scientific misconduct](#) in the drug literature is higher than in general biomedical literature," said Simon Pickard, associate professor of pharmacy practice and senior author of a study published in the journal *Pharmacotherapy*.

Nearly three-quarters of the retracted drug studies were attributed to scientific misconduct, he said, "which includes data falsification or fabrication, questionable veracity, unethical author conduct, or plagiarism. While these studies comprise a small percentage of the overall literature, [health care](#) professionals may rely on this evidence to make treatment recommendations."

These studies can affect the treatment of thousands of patients, since scientific publications are often printed months in advance. There is an average lag in time of 39 months between the original publication and a retraction notice, Pickard said.

"Once a health care professional changes treatment options, it's not easy to reverse," said Jennifer Samp, a fellow in Pickard's research group and lead author of the study. "Staying current with new findings in scientific [literature](#) is a priority for health care practitioners -- especially

pharmacists -- and it is important for them to know when a study has been retracted, especially those with manipulated data."

The UIC team found that a considerable number of the retracted papers were attributable to two authors, one based in Japan and the other in Germany.

Little attention was paid to the implications of scientific publication retractions until a 1998 review documented 235 instances from 1966 to 1997; 37 percent of the retractions were due to scientific misconduct.

Since the 1998 study, more interest has been given to retracted studies. In 2009, the Committee on Publication Ethics released the first set of guidelines to editors on issuing retractions.

"These guidelines should help to reduce the extent and impact of scientific misconduct," Pickard said. "Ironically, greater detection may give the impression that fraudulent science is on the rise, when it is actually being mitigated by these policies."

Glen Schumock, director of the UIC Center for Pharmacoeconomic Research, assisted Pickard and Samp in the study, which was funded by the UIC College of Pharmacy and Takeda Pharmaceuticals U.S.A, Inc., which funded Samp's fellowship.

Provided by University of Illinois at Chicago

Citation: Facts in scientific drug literature may not be, study finds (2012, May 30) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-05-facts-scientific-drug-literature.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is

provided for information purposes only.