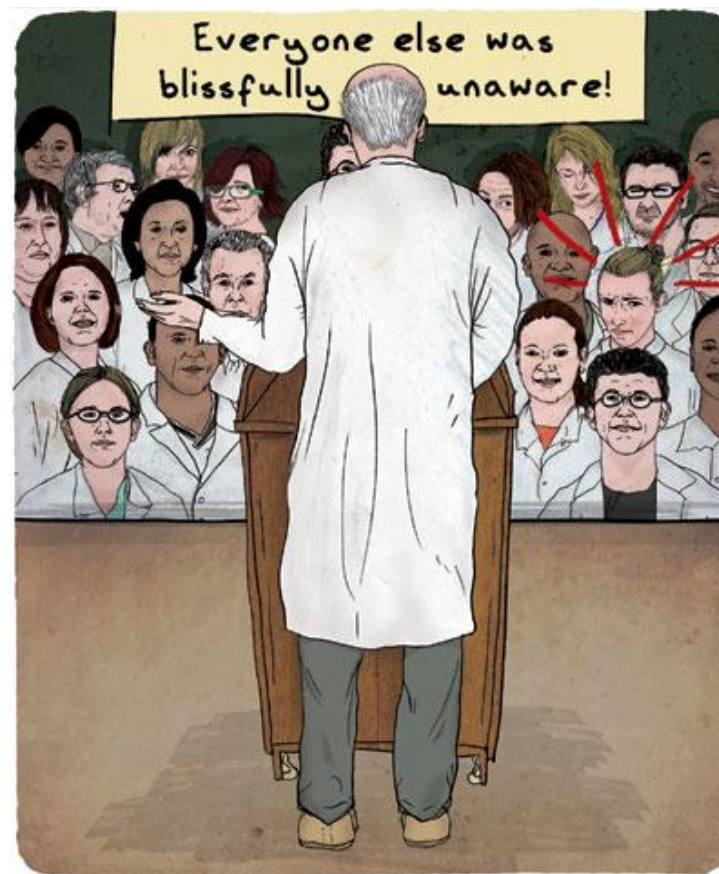


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BMJ's research misconduct survey



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Methods

- Emailed a “Confidential request from the Editor of the BMJ” asking reviewers and authors on our database to take part in short anonymous survey
- eSurveyspro software link provided in email invitation
- 3 short questions
- Used Adestra (email marketing) software for distributing the email invitations
- Those who didn’t open the email were sent a reminder 3 days later

Sample

- UK based people registered on the BMJ's manuscript tracking system (who had not opted out of email correspondence)
- Mixed sample of academics & clinicians based in the UK
- Included submitting authors of all types of journal content and reviewers for the journal

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Dear Colleague,

The BMJ would be very grateful if you could answer three quick questions in an online survey about research misconduct. Your answers will be completely anonymous and will only be analysed and presented in aggregate form to help inform UK policy.

Do feel free to email me separately and in confidence if you have any queries or issues you would like to raise in relation to these questions.

The BMJ is sending this invitation to all its authors and reviewers based in the UK. To access the survey please click on the link below or paste the link into your internet browser:

<http://bit.ly/ssW30i>

Many thanks and best wishes,

Fiona Godlee (fgodlee@bmj.com)
Editor in chief, BMJ

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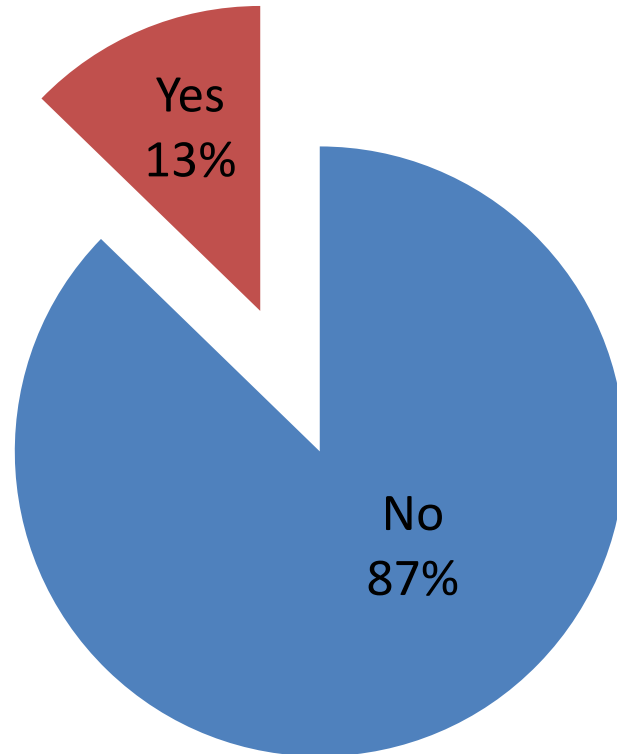
Results

- 11,012 email addresses uploaded to Adestra
 - 12 excluded as “bad” email addresses
 - 1957 delivery failures on Adestra
 - 7 automated responses saying email address has now changed
- 9036 emails actually delivered

Response rate

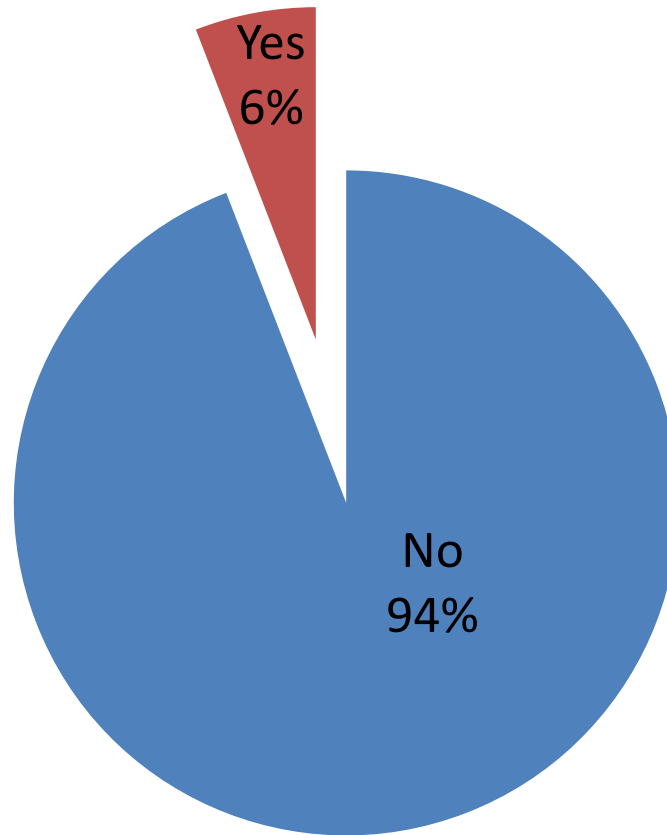
- 2782 / 9036 (31%) responses received

Have you witnessed, or do you have firsthand knowledge of, UK-based scientists or doctors inappropriately adjusting, excluding, altering or fabricating data during their research or for the purposes of publication?



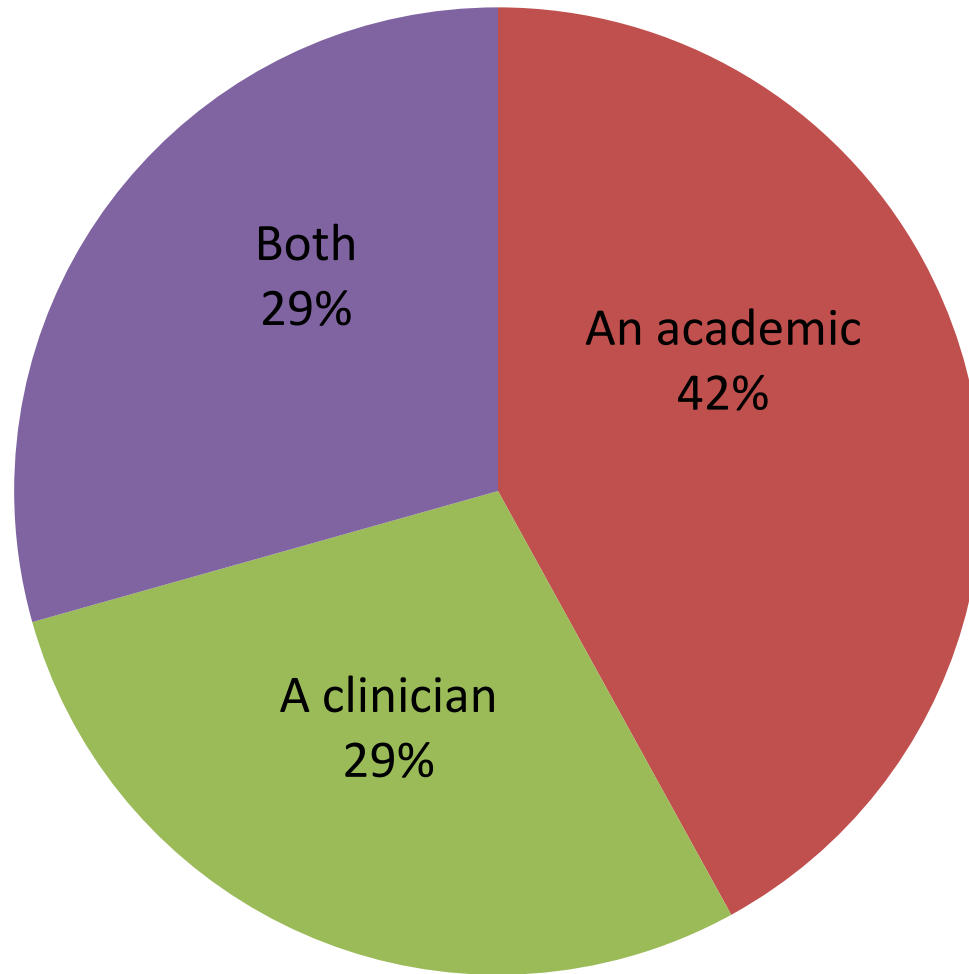
354/2782 (13%)
responses said
YES

Are you aware of any cases of possible research misconduct at your institution that, in your view, have not been properly investigated?



163/ 2782 (6%)
responses said YES

Are you primarily:



Previous research I

Kalichman & Friedman. A pilot study of biomedical trainees' perceptions concerning research ethics. *Acad Med* 1992;67:769-75

- Surveyed 2010 biomedical trainees at University of California
- 549 (27%) responded
- 55/549 (10%) had firsthand knowledge of scientists or doctors intentionally altering or fabricating data for the purpose of publication?

D Geggie. A survey of newly appointed consultants' attitudes towards research fraud. *J Med Ethics* 2001;27:344-346

- Participants—Medical consultants appointed between Jan 1995 and Jan 2000 in 7 UK hospital trusts
- 194/305 (64%) responded
- 21 (10.8%) reported having first-hand knowledge of the intentional altering or fabrication of data for the purposes of publication

Conclusions

- Only 31% responded so doesn't capture the whole situation, but does illustrate 354 examples (assuming the cases are independent) which shows misconduct does occur in the UK

Limitations

- Received reports of eg NHS institutions blocking access to survey website
- Some participants will have been clinicians not involved in research in which case they are more likely to say they haven't had firsthand experience of it
- Sensitive subject and there may have been concerns over confidentiality
- Those with cases to report may have been more likely to respond
- Unable to break responses down by academic/clinician variable as the free version of software doesn't give the raw data
- Results are still coming in (launched on 4th Jan)

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