

Comments on: An editorial perspective on the infamous COVID-19 studies retracted by Lancet and NEJM

Dear Editor,
I congratulate you on the excellent guest editorial on your perspective on the COVID-19 studies retraction by *Lancet* and *NEJM*.

You have stated that the apology and retraction issued by the lead author and the major journals were a major step, which was not only timely but also courageous. You fear that the simmering conflict between evidence-based medicine (EBM) and reliance on clinical acumen and personal experience which is not data-driven has resurfaced and might grow. You have also sided with the data-driven recommendations.

In an uncertain world, where the dictum is to “publish or perish,” knowing that a lot of effort and scientific rigor is required to get a work published, a certain amount of deceit is considered by many to be necessary for publication success. To counter it, the fear of stringent punishment is necessary. Therefore, the retraction by major journals should be accompanied by the blacklisting of these deceitful authors by most of the journals.

I believe that EBM should be used to prove the expert opinion based on unstructured use of evidence w.r.t personal experience and clinical acumen. However, EBM still has a long way to go. As any meta-analysis or review article will tell you, the number of studies providing high-quality evidence for a given topic are very few.^[1] The growing perception that a lot of hidden agenda goes behind the creation of a drug/vaccine/procedure is also a huge bane as the bogus Covid-19 studies prove.^[2]

Hard training and mentorship in clinical research right from the literature search to statistics to manuscript writing is essential. Then editors, reviewers, and readers will be constantly aware of the problems in clinical research and would be able to fine-tune the standards for developing trustworthy guidelines for every sphere of clinical research.^[3]

EBM is here to stay and such episodes as the COVID-19 controversies are wakeup calls for further improvement.

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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