

The San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) in Nursing Science

Nursing Science Quarterly
2022, Vol. 35(2) 275–276
© The Author(s) 2022



Article reuse guidelines:
sagepub.com/journals-permissions
DOI: 10.1177/08943184211070602
journals.sagepub.com/home/nsq



Siobhan O'Connor, RGN; PhD¹ 

Keywords

Declaration on Research Assessment, DORA, nursing, research output, research quality

Dear Editor:

In 2012, a group of editors and publishers came together at the 2012 Annual Meeting of the American Society for Cell Biology to discuss and agree on how scholarly research outputs should be assessed across all disciplines, along with the responsible use of metrics that are in keeping with core academic values. Those at this meeting hoped to address some of the disparities created by Journal Impact Factors (JIFs) and other bibliographic metrics that are open to misappropriation and manipulation (Johnstone, 2007). The “quality” indicators in the JIFs can influence nursing and other scientists who can be judged by employers, colleagues, students, and funders regardless of the flaws in how they are generated. The event culminated in the launch of 18 recommendations known as the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) (Declaration on Research Assessment, 2021a). These recommendations were aimed at a number of stakeholders including funding agencies, institutions, publishers, organizations that supply metrics, and researchers in terms of how they approach evaluating the quality of research outputs (Cagan, 2013).

DORA endorsed assessing research on its value and not based on the journal in which it is published, suggesting that journal-based metrics such as JIFs should be avoided when evaluating the contribution of researchers in their fields and for decisions made when appointing, promoting, and funding scientists. DORA also advocated for a number of other improvements such as publishers using a range of journal-based metrics, like the 5-year impact factor, EigenFactor, SCImago, h-index, and editorial and publishing times, as well as reducing the limits on word count and the number of tables, figures, and references that can be included in articles, as these can be unnecessary given the

flexibility afforded to online publishing. It also recommended that additional research outputs were valued by funders and others including openly available datasets and software, and alternative measures of the impact of research outputs. These could include the influence on policy and practice, which can contribute to the advancement of science and society (Declaration on Research Assessment, 2021b).

Since DORA was launched nearly a decade ago, over 2,000 organizations and 17,000 individuals across 145 countries have signed up to the declaration, most of them based in the United States (Declaration on Research Assessment, 2021c). Some of these are publishing companies such as Elsevier and Taylor and Francis or specific journals such as the *British Journal of General Practice* and the *Journal of General Physiology*, while others are funding agencies such as the UK Medical Research Council and the Irish Research Council, or universities, like the University of Melbourne and the University of Calgary. Scientific societies such as the American Association for Anatomy and the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences, along with libraries such as the Public Library of Science, are also represented, as are thousands of individual researchers from around the world who have signed up to DORA. Surprisingly, very few nursing scientists, nursing associations, or nursing journals have endorsed the recommendations, most likely due to a lack of awareness about the global initiative. While many may already employ some of the DORA recommendations, to develop and encourage best practice when assessing nursing research and nurse scientists, individuals and organizations could

¹School of Nursing and Midwifery, National University of Ireland Galway, Galway, Ireland

become a signatory of DORA and promote its principles in their day-to-day work. This could help improve and advance nursing science, locally and internationally.

Siobhan O'Connor, RGN; PhD
Lecturer, School of Nursing and Midwifery
National University of Ireland Galway, Galway, Ireland


Declaration of Conflicting Interest

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the authorship and/or publication of this review.

Funding

The author received no financial support for the authorship and/or publication of this review.

ORCID iD

Siobhan O'Connor  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8579-1718>

References

- Cagan, R. (2013). The San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment. *Disease Models & Mechanisms*, 6(4), 869-870. <https://doi.org/10.1242/dmm.012955>
- Declaration on Research Assessment. (2021a). *About DORA*. <https://sfdora.org/about-dora/>
- Declaration on Research Assessment. (2021b). *San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment*. <https://sfdora.org/read/>
- Declaration on Research Assessment. (2021c). *Signers*. <https://sfdora.org/signers/>
- Johnstone, M. J. (2007). Journal impact factors: Implications for the nursing profession. *International Nursing Review*, 54(1), 35-40. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1466-7657.2007.00527.x>