

A difference has been made....

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Editorial

A few months ago, a letter to the editor was submitted by Dr. Axel Wiebrecht, a highly respected expert in Chinese Herbal Therapy, particularly known for his emphasis on safety. Dr. Wiebrecht is also actively involved as a reviewer for Complementary Medicine Research (CMR). According to CMR's guidelines for authors "*Letters may explore subjects related to matters discussed in the journal, providing the author's perspective on a subject. Letters may discuss a recently published article and may lend support or constructively critique the article in line with the author's experience...*". Although it's not uncommon for experts like Dr. Wiebrecht to submit letters, his letter stood out immediately. His perspective was uncommonly noteworthy, and I found myself drawn to his argument.

At the time the letter was sent to Complementary Medicine Research, the instructions for authors did not include specific recommendations on how to describe and report herbal products or traditional Chinese medicine remedies. Although it is commonly understood that providing a detailed description of a remedy is crucial for replicating a study, explicit requirements for such detailed descriptions of herbal medicines were not outlined in the instructions for authors at that time."

In response to Dr. Wiebrecht's justified criticism, changes have been made. The instructions for authors for Complementary Medicine Research now include the following paragraph:

All pharmacological interventions used, including conventional medicines as well as traditional remedies and herbs need to be described in detail. This includes total dosage, composition and component dosage, origin of the medicine/remedy, route of administration, time schedule, and possible combination with other medicines/remedies/herbs/non-pharmacological interventions."

Moreover, we also specify that reports of Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs) or Systematic Reviews to the journal must follow the reporting requirements of the CONSORT or PRISMA statement, respectively, or those of the relevant extensions including that on herbal medical formulas [1,2,3].

The peer review system has its strengths and challenges; however, it remains the best method we have for evaluating the quality of scientific contributions to a field. Transparency is a crucial requirement for ensuring the reproducibility of scientific work. As Editor-in-Chief, I extend my gratitude to everyone who contributes to this system, often on a voluntary basis driven by a passion for science. This includes reviewers, associate editors, and colleagues like Dr. Wiebrecht, whose efforts truly make a difference.

Science is a dynamic process, and the field of Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) has undergone significant changes in research questions, methodologies, and focus over the last few decades. I have been involved with CMR for almost two decades, initially as an associate editor and now as Editor-in-Chief. The submissions we receive today are markedly different from those we received 15 years ago.

A scientific journal must evolve to reflect the dynamics of the field; otherwise, it risks becoming irrelevant. However, the conditions for publication must also adapt accordingly. These adjustments are crucial to maintain the quality of publications at a high standard. Constructive contributions to enhance the scientific quality of the journal are highly valued and greatly welcomed!

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