Keeping science fair

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Blog post published April 16, 2011 in *Alex Holcombe's blog*
https://doi.org/10.59350/ga1m5-kw949

Abstract

Blind justice. A beautiful ideal! That the merits of a case are to be decided without regard to the identities of the parties involved or the size of their bank accounts.

Keywords

Cognitive Neuroscience (Subfield), Academia, Science 2.0

Recommended citation

Holcombe, A. O. (2011, April 16). Keeping science fair. *Alex Holcombe's Blog*. https://doi.org/10.59350/ga1m5-kw949

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Blind justice. A beautiful ideal! That the merits of a case are to be decided without regard to the identities of the parties involved or the size of their bank accounts.

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This is something science aspires to in evaluating manuscripts for publication. In fact it's fundamental to the integrity of science- when you read an article in a scientific journal, the idea is that you should know that the article went through the same review process as all the others.

The science you see in a prestigious journal is not there because the authors paid more than others did, but rather because the science was evaluated as high quality on its own merits. There are flaws in the process, such as the bias that occurs because usually the reviewers know who the manuscript authors are, but at least there's no real money involved- nothing as meretricious as some cash to grease the wheels.

But now money has started to infiltrate the system. Several journals are now accepting money for "fast-track" services. It is hard to see how this policy can be implemented without sometimes giving the monied authors an advantage over those who don't pay. Fast-tracking seems likely to

leads to shortcut by the editor or reviewers as they seek to meet the fast-tracking deadline. And it seems these journals won't even indicate which manuscripts benefited from fast-tracking and which didn't.

Please join us in signing an open protest letter that we'll soon send to these journals.

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