

by cbpolis 3 years ago

## #AskLancet (responses not included)

I was so excited when I saw this opportunity! I definitely had questions for Lancet Editors, given my harrowing experience publishing a systematic review in *Lancet Infectious Diseases* and experiencing serious unethical misconduct by a peer reviewer (full blog post about this here: [chelseapolis.com/1/post/201...](http://chelseapolis.com/1/post/201...)).

# THE LANCET

## Live Twitter Chat

Join us for a one-hour Q&A session with four senior *Lancet* editors



<b>Richard Horton</b> Editor-in-Chief, <i>The Lancet</i> @RichardHorton1	<b>John McConnell</b> Editor, <i>The Lancet Infectious Diseases</i> @TheLancetInfDis	<b>Niall Boyce</b> Editor, <i>The Lancet Psychiatry</i> @TheLancetPsych	<b>Tamara Lucas</b> Executive Editor, <i>The Lancet</i> @TheLancet
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**Thursday 27th November | 10.30-11.30am GMT**

What would you like to ask our team of editors? Send us questions using [#AskLancet](#) for an open Q&A this Thursday. [pic.twitter.com/cxOrpJvjGa](https://pic.twitter.com/cxOrpJvjGa)

 THE LANCET @THELANCET  @cbpolis · 3 YEARS AGO

I [#AskedLancet](#) if they've updated any of their policies subsequent to what happened to me, so that other scientists could avoid similar debacles.

## Editor's note

Shortly before publication of a systematic review of hormonal contraceptive use and HIV acquisition in women by Chelsea Polis and Kathryn Curtis,<sup>1</sup> we were made aware that an early draft of the paper had been posted on the website of the Rebecca Project, a US-based campaign group. The draft manuscript had been posted without the knowledge or agreement of the authors or *The Lancet Infectious Diseases*. Given the format of the posted draft, it could only have come from one of the peer reviewers asked to advise on the paper. The journal requires that peer reviewers keep confidential manuscripts that they agree to review, thus passing a copy to a third party is a clear breach of the ethical standards of peer review.

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exceptional circumstances of a breach of ethics and failure to respond to inquiries, we have decided that the third reviewer will not be asked to peer review for the journal again.

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This case has been discussed by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), and this note accords with the advice given by COPE. The case has made us aware of the need to exercise caution before choosing as a peer reviewer an individual who has no institutional affiliation. The paper by Polis and Curtis published online on July 19, 2013, and in the September 2013 issue of *The Lancet Infectious Diseases* remains the definitive version.

John McConnell

The Lancet Infectious Diseases, 32 Jamestown Road, London NW1 7BY, UK

1 Polis CB, Curtis KM. Use of hormonal contraceptives and HIV acquisition in women: a systematic review of the epidemiological evidence. *Lancet Infect Dis* 2013; **13**: 797-808.

#AskLancet Has LID updated any policy so other authors don't face unresolved #PeerReview misconduct? @JohnSMcConnell [pic.twitter.com/JSD9CASnag](https://pic.twitter.com/JSD9CASnag)

 CHELSEA POLIS, PHD @CBPOLIS · 3 YEARS AGO


I [#AskedLancet](#) to be more specific on some of the vague language in their Editor's Note.



Chelsea Polis, PhD

@cbpolis

#AskLancet eg, how will you implement "exercise caution before choosing as a peer reviewer an individual who has no institutional affiliation"?

 3 YEARS AGO

I also [#AskedLancet](#) if they could provide an update on efforts to have our manuscript (which was leaked by an unethical peer reviewer and illegally posted online, violating copyright) taken down.

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#AskLancet Any update on "Efforts to have draft manuscript taken down now in hands of lawyers acting for journal"? [pic.twitter.com/SEcSuiJ82](https://twitter.com/SEcSuiJ82)

 CHELSEA POLIS, PHD @CBPOLIS · 3 YEARS AGO

A kind colleague took interest, and shared this information with Ivan Oransky, who runs Retraction Watch.



**Zackary Berger, MD**  
@ZackBergerMDPhD

@ivanoransky Ivan, do you know about this? @cbpolis had an accepted manuscript at a Lancet jI leaked by a peer reviewer

 3 YEARS AGO

That colleague also kindly Retweeted my question.

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MT @cbpolis: #AskLancet Any update on "Efforts to have draft taken down now in hands of lawyers"? [pic.twitter.com/NhrmlZyGSj](https://pic.twitter.com/NhrmlZyGSj) cc @ivanoransky

 ZACKARY BERGER, MD @ZACKBERGERMDPHD · 3 YEARS AGO


And then, Lancet Infectious Diseases responded to one of my questions! (Well, they didn't respond to me, the aggrieved author; but instead, to the man who had retweeted me.) They pointed us to the following article, where we were able to dig around for this statement: "As far as we're aware, our publishers, Elsevier, have now exhausted credible legal means of redress," said Daisy Barton, *The Lancet's* media relations manager, by email. "The matter is not currently being pursued further."

 Lancet Inf Diseases  
@TheLancetInfDis

@ZackBergerMDPhD @cbpolis @ivanoransky Answer is in this article  
[theverge.com/2014/10/21/699...](http://theverge.com/2014/10/21/699...) #AskLancet

 3 YEARS AGO


I was not terribly impressed.

 Chelsea Polis, PhD  
@cbpolis

.@TheLancetInfDis @ZackBergerMDPhD @ivanoransky Sending a few letters="exhausting" means of redress for LID copyright violation? #AskLancet


 3 YEARS AGO

And I wondered - what does it take for someone like me to get a response around here?




**Chelsea Polis, PhD**  
 @cbpolis

.@TheLancetInfDis @ZackBergerMDPhD @ivanoransky If Zack RTs my oth ?s eg [twitter.com/cbpolis/status...](https://twitter.com/cbpolis/status...) will they b deemed worth rspnse? #AskLancet


 3 YEARS AGO

So I chimed in to a separate conversation that the Editor-in-Chief of The Lancet was having about relying on honesty and integrity.



**richard horton**  
 richardhorton1

@E\_and\_Integrity We ask, for sure. But we rely on personal honesty and integrity. Is that enough? I hope so. #AskLancet

 3 YEARS AGO

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@richardhorton1 Wasn't enough in this case. & theories of unethical rev'r had been debunked...IN Lancet. Why chosen? [pic.twitter.com/vErz1rc5Jj](https://pic.twitter.com/vErz1rc5Jj)

 CHELSEA POLIS, PHD @CBPOLIS · 3 YEARS AGO

And in response to the Executive Editor of Lancet asking if folks had questions, reiterated mine...



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@tamarylucas123 Yes! But they went unanswered: [twitter.com/cbpolis/status....](https://twitter.com/cbpolis/status/2013000000000000000)  
[pic.twitter.com/vdArx0FsMQ](https://pic.twitter.com/vdArx0FsMQ)

 CHELSEA POLIS, PHD @CBPOLIS · 3 YEARS AGO

So far, nada. But I'll let you know if/when the crickets stop chirping!



**Dr. Seema Yasmin**

Doctor Yasmin

@cbpolis @richardhorton1 Waiting for a response...


 3 YEARS AGO



**Chelsea Polis, PhD**

@cbpolis

@DoctorYasmin @richardhorton1 Thank you very much for caring about this, Dr. Yasmin.

 3 YEARS AGO