Publisher Preferences for a Journal Transparency Tool: A Delphi Study

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Introduction

- Predatory practices are on the rise within the scientific community and are posing a threat to transparency and openness in research
- We propose the creation of a journal transparency tool (JTT) to combat these practices and, to develop this tool, we are collecting preferences from various stakeholders

- **Aim**: To identify preferences for a JTT within the publisher community

The publishing community's key priorities for a journal transparency tool (JTT) are to ensure that the tool is relevant, equitable, accessible, & user-friendly.

JTT Website Prototype

JTT Browser Plugin Prototype

Methods

- **Recruitment**: Purposeful, snowball sampling
- **Three-round Delphi study**
  - Round 1: Online survey
    - Respondents (n=86) voted on JTT metrics and user features
  - Round 2: Online survey
    - Respondents (n=43) voted on round 1 items that did not reach consensus, as well as new items suggested in round 1
  - Round 3: Online consensus group
    - Participants (n=18) discussed and voted on JTT metrics that did not reach consensus in Round 2

Results

- After all rounds of voting, 15 out of 30 JTT metric items and none of the four JTT user feature items met the 80% consensus threshold (**Table 1**)
- Two themes were created based on an analysis of the online round 3 consensus group transcript (**Table 2**)

Discussion

- Ensuring the tool is equitable, accessible, user-friendly, and relevant appeared to be the primary concern for participants
- **Next steps**: Patient, along with researcher and clinician community, preferences will be synthesized with results from this study to create the JTT
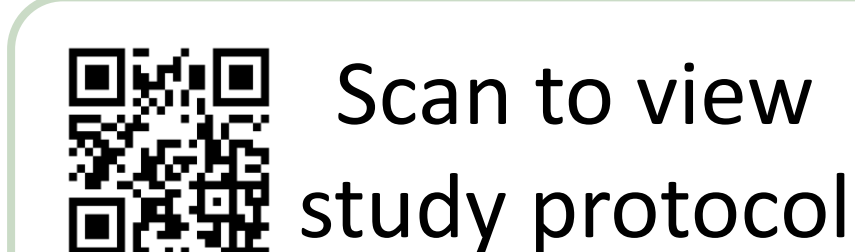
Table 1. Consensus Items

#	Item	Round consensus was reached	Score/Decision[a]	n (%)
1	A metric reporting whether the journal describes its approach to publication ethics or not	1	Important (7–9)	75 (87.2%)
2	A metric reporting whether there is verifiable contact information or not	1	Important (7–9)	74 (87.1%)
3	A metric reporting whether the journal uses fake DOIs or not	1	Important (7–9)	73 (84.9%)
4	A metric reporting whether the journal editors are listed or not	1	Important (7–9)	71 (82.6%)
5	A metric reporting whether the journal reports misleading scholarly metrics or not	1	Important (7–9)	69 (81.2%)
6	A metric reporting the journal's policies regarding reporting ethics, funding, and conflicts of interest	2	Important (7–9)	32 (97.0%)
7	A metric reporting the journal's policies on retractions/corrections	2	Important (7–9)	30 (90.9%)
8	A metric reporting the journal's peer review model and metrics	2	Important (7–9)	30 (90.9%)
9	A metric reporting whether the journal uses DOIs or not	2	Important (7–9)	37 (88.1%)
10	A metric reporting whether the written content presented on the website is clear or not	3	Exclude	95%
11	A metric reporting whether the journal has any article submission or processing fees	3	Include	94%
12	A metric reporting whether the journal is a member of COPE or not	3	Include	86%
13	A metric reporting whether the journal uses ORCIDs or not	3	Include	86%
14	For open access journals, a metric reporting whether the journal is listed in the DOAJ or not	3	Include	81%
15	An option for the journal transparency tool to collect/share journal incidents	3	Exclude	81%

[a] Round 1 and 2 items were scored on a 9-point scale, where 1 to 3 points were categorized as 'unimportant,' 4 to 7 points were categorized as 'neutral,' and 7 to 9 points were categorized as 'important' for inclusion within the tool

Table 2. Round 3 Themes

Themes	Codes	Code Description	Example Quotes
Factors Impacting Support for JTT Metrics	Metric Scoring System	Participants provided support for metrics based on if there was an objective means and clear criteria to score the metric.	"How is this going to be assessed?" (P1)
	Transparency	Participants provided support for metrics based on how relevant they are to transparency and open practices.	"Looking at transparency, I do think it is relevant..." (P2)
	Redundancy	Participants provided support for metrics based on if the information gathered by the metric was also captured in another metric.	"...if it's not going to be included already..." (P3)
	Membership Criteria	Participants provided support for metrics based on how challenging it is to gain membership for that metric, when relevant.	"...membership...takes a very long time." (P1)
	Exclusionary selection criteria	Participants provided support for metrics based on how biased a metric may be against journals based on selection criteria that is not related to predatory practices (e.g., language, costs, location).	"...concern is... the cost for journals in lower-middle income countries" (P4)
Suggestions for User Clarity	Metric Descriptions	Users should be given descriptions of what the metric is, how it is measured on the JTT, and potential biases associated with the metric.	"...to have a more general disclaimer..." (P2)
	Naming Labels	The naming of the JTT and its components should be clear and accurate.	"We're talking a lot about metrics here, but some of these are more like indicators." (P5)

Scan to view study protocol