

Public Integrity Resources adapted in a Research Integrity Program for Scientific Institutions – An innovative proposal in development

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Institution

Adolfo Lutz Institute - IAL* - Founded in 1940 in the city of São Paulo, Brazil

- Central Public Health Laboratory – São Paulo State Department of Health
- Scientific Research Institution
- Twelve regional units throughout the state of São Paulo

Mission: To contribute to epidemiological and sanitary surveillance, environmental prevention, control and elimination of diseases

Activities:

- Scientific Research – Mainly biomedical studies
- Public Health Services - Diagnosis of disease
- Educational and training activities - Postgraduate activities

Did you know? *IAL was responsible for the first laboratory confirmation of the first case of Covid-19 in Latin America in Feb/2020

- Ref: COVID-19 in Latin America: The implications of the first confirmed case in Brazil - <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7129040/>



Guiding Questions

- How can we foster a culture of Research Integrity (RI) to promote the quality of science in the institution?
- How to assign clear responsibilities for RI to the institution's science professionals?
- How can we guarantee support mechanisms to promote an institutional culture of RI?
- How can RI strategies and standards be developed, implemented, monitored and evaluated to transform the institutional ethical climate?

Objectives

To establish an institutional RI framework, a strategy was devised to adapt existing Public Integrity resources to be used within an innovative Research Integrity Program.

The aim of this work was to provide a reflection on this proposal and its theoretical and practical development, pre-implementation, focusing on the difficulties and solutions encountered in establishing it in a Brazilian research institution.

Route Taken

- Initially, a work group was set up to study the RI issue and assess the necessary institutional actions
- Elaboration of a guide “Recommendations for Good Institutional Scientific Practices”
- Establishment of the RI Committee and drafting of internal regulations
- Proposal to insert a RI Program based on public integrity programs (Brazilian integrity laws and guidelines, based on Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - OECD (2020) instructions by the Comptroller General of the Union - CGU - federal government branch)

Further information in the article:

Implementation of the Research Integrity Committee of Adolfo Lutz Institute - Proposals for the Promotion of a Culture of Institutional Scientific Integrity

<https://periodicos.saude.sp.gov.br/BEPA182/article/view/37814>



How it works?

This unprecedented proposal in Brazil is based on an Institutional RI Program, a structured system that: **1)** has the commitment and support of top institutional management **2)** has a body responsible for managing RI **3)** carries out educational and preventive actions on responsible conduct in research **4)** promotes a culture of RI **5)** establishes RI guidelines supporting researchers in decision-making; guiding responsibility in scientific research practices **6)** is able to monitor and follow up on institutional RI through risk management and compliance in RI and, if necessary, disciplinary action for research misconduct. **7)** promotes, monitor and carry out continuous evaluation and improvement of the program itself.

Challenges faced

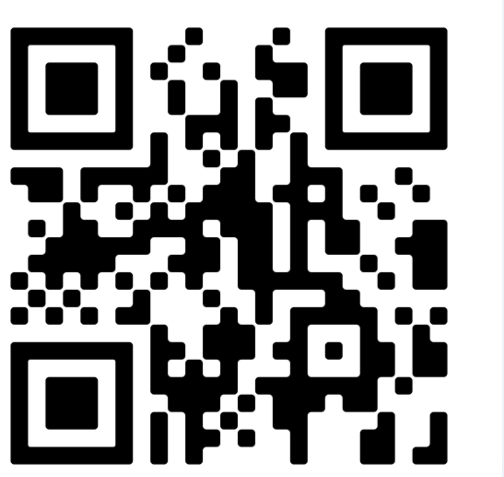
- Setting up the working group for the RI study/ Coherent profile of members/Changes in the composition of members
- Members' time available to carry out the committee's work (non-exclusive dedication)
- Initial understanding and commitment from the top institutional management
- Bureaucratic difficulty in inserting the committee into the institutional organizational structure
- Location available and budget provision for setting up the committee
- Availability of human resources for the committee's executive secretariat
- Lack of a direct communication channel with the scientific community
- Lack of established RI guidelines and rules in the institution
- Reluctance to reflect on RI (institutional scientific community)

Achievements

The implementation of this new program is currently underway.

- ✓ Publication of the result of the work of the study group appointed to set up an institutional body responsible for RI;
- ✓ Implementation of the body responsible, regulations for its operation;
- ✓ Initial RI educational and preventive activities;
- ✓ Holding events that promote ethical reflection and RI training;
- ✓ Establishment and publication of guides, directives, institutional RI policy and RI plan - first document of the institutional RI Program;
- ✓ Elaboration of a research project on the perception of RI among the institutional scientific community;
- ✓ A book* on the proposal for a RI program for institutions and scientists was published in 2022.

Further information: * **“Research Integrity Program for Institutions and Scientists Quality Science is made with Integrity”** – Bráulio C. Machado and Maria F. C. Pires, Ed. Dialética – São Paulo – Brazil, 2022 (in Portuguese).



Closing Remarks

This proposal is innovative and could help scientific institutions that have not yet established measures for RI issues by bringing together experiences of public integrity and compliance with other experiences that have been established to deal with the issue by the international scientific community that studies RI.

Final Comment

The RI program is also characterized by its openness to introducing good and new ideas inside, such as those presented at this event. The feedback from this conference will be used to improve it.

P.S.: This work reflects the moment of transition from the original idea of my doctoral thesis* to the practical application in the institution, reflecting theoretically on all the challenges encountered and opportunities since I took over the coordination of the institutional RI committee.