Research Integrity in Communication Sciences and Disorders: Preface

**SUPPLEMENT**

**Purpose:** A joint program on Research on Research Integrity sponsored by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke and the Office of Research Integrity encouraged the examination of practices and policies promoting the responsible conduct of research (RCR). The authors’ grant—Research Integrity in ASHA: Education and Publication—enabled American Speech-Language-Hearing Association’s (ASHA) Research Integrity Grant Group to (a) identify patterns of teaching and learning in Communication Sciences and Disorders graduate programs about specific topics of research integrity on the conduct of science, (b) examine perceptions about concepts of research integrity as they apply to scientific journals within the discipline, and (c) evaluate policies and practices established by ASHA to protect the integrity of published scientific work.

**Method:** The authors reviewed historical and contemporary literature, conducted surveys, and analyzed ASHA policies.

**Conclusion:** This supplement of the Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research has been written with the aim of informing and inspiring scientists, students, research institutions, and professional societies to practice responsible research in the 21st century and beyond.

**KEY WORDS:** research integrity, responsible conduct of research, communication sciences and disorders

During the past decade, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) has systematically been examining research integrity issues in the discipline of Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD), mindful that “scientific societies have unique opportunities to heighten the awareness of researchers to the ethical issues surrounding the responsible practice of science ... in three main areas: codes, policies, and education” (Macrina, 2007). ASHA has engaged in a multi-pronged effort, through research and education, to promote topics concerning scientific integrity, research ethics, and research misconduct. In 2001, ASHA and the Office of Research Integrity disseminated proceedings of a conference titled “Promoting Research Integrity in Communication Sciences and Disorders and Related Disciplines” (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association [ASHA], & U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). Subsequently, ASHA revised its Code of Ethics to include research integrity issues (ASHA, 2003), and published Protection of Human Subjects (ASHA, 2005). ASHA recently adopted Guidelines for the Responsible Conduct of Research: Ethics and the Publication Process (ASHA, 2007; see also Metz & Folkins, 1985), and is nearing completion of a document entitled Procedures for Responding to Allegations of Scientific Misconduct Pertaining to all Research Grants and Contracts From/to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.
In 2002, ASHA received a research grant from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke and the Office of Research Integrity, through its joint program on Research on Research Integrity that encouraged the examination of practices and policies promoting the responsible conduct of research (RCR). The grant titled “Research Integrity in ASHA: Education and Publication” (Grant NS44534) enabled investigators involved in ASHA’s Research Integrity Grant Group to (a) identify patterns of teaching and learning in CSD graduate programs about specific topics of research integrity on the conduct of science, (b) examine perceptions about concepts of research integrity as they apply to scientific journals within the discipline, and (c) evaluate policies and practices established by ASHA to protect the integrity of published scientific work.

During the course of its grant-funded research, ASHA’s Research Integrity Grant Group was guided by the Office of Research Integrity’s core instructional areas regarding RCR: (a) human subjects protections; (b) research involving animals; publication practices and responsible authorship; (c) mentor/trainee responsibilities; (d) collaborative science; (e) peer review; (f) data acquisition, management, sharing, and ownership; (g) conflict of interest and commitment; and (h) research misconduct (Office of Research Integrity, 2000; Pimple, 2002). As the project unfolded, ASHA’s Research Integrity Grant Group presented its research findings in numerous venues (see Moss et al., 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2005a, 2005b, 2006).

For this Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research (JSLHR) supplement, Horner and Minifie prepared three review articles: “Research Ethics I,” “Research Ethics II,” and “Research Ethics III.” The aim of these review articles was to (a) place the core instructional RCR areas in historical context, (b) identify authoritative policy resources, (c) review empirical literature, and (d) highlight contemporary scientific integrity issues. “Research Ethics I” explains the history and current setting for the ethics of animal and human experimentation. “Research Ethics II” expands on RCR topics by reviewing seminal documents and identifying contemporary issues pertaining to (a) mentor/trainee responsibilities; (b) collaborative science; (c) peer review; and (d) data acquisition, management, sharing, and ownership. “Research Ethics III” examines (a) publication practices and responsible authorship; (b) conflicts of interest and commitment; and (c) research misconduct. The last two articles in this JSLHR supplement address original empirical findings of ASHA’s Research Integrity Grant Group. The fourth article is entitled “Responsible Conduct of Research in Communication Sciences and Disorders: Faculty and Student Perceptions,” in which Minifie et al. report the results of two Web-based surveys. In the first survey, the investigators explored what is being taught about RCR in undergraduate and graduate educational programs in CSD. In the second survey, the investigators sampled opinions of undergraduate and graduate students in CSD programs to assess their perceptions about what is being learned about RCR.

The fifth and final article in this JSLHR supplement is entitled “Ethical Principles Associated with the Publication of Research in ASHA’s Scholarly Journals: Importance and Adequacy of Coverage.” Authors Ingham et al. report the results of two studies. In the first study, investigators surveyed the ASHA membership about 56 topics relevant to research publication ethics. Three constituencies of ASHA membership were asked to (a) rate the importance of each of the topics and (b) indicate their judgment of the adequacy with which ASHA publication policy documents address each topic. The three groups of respondents were as follows: Group 1 (ASHA journal former editors, associate editors, and Publications Board members); Group 2 (authors, reviewers, and former ASHA Board of Ethics members); and Group 3 (journal readers). In the second study, the investigators convened an expert panel to closely review all ASHA publication policy documents in terms of their coverage of the 56 topics in the survey.

The themes that tie together these diverse topics are the responsibility of both scientists and institutions to establish and uphold ethical standards and practices in the conduct of research, and the necessity for education about RCR. In short, this JSLHR supplement has been written with the aim of informing and inspiring scientists, students, research institutions, and professional societies to practice responsible research in the 21st century and beyond.

Sharon E. Moss, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator

Acknowledgments

This research was supported by a grant from the Office of Research Integrity and the National Institutes of Health Grant NS44534.

References


Received December 7, 2009
Accepted October 4, 2010
DOI: 10.1044/1092-4388(2011/09-0266)

Contact author: Sharon Moss, who is now with the Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Research Oversight, 810 Vermont Avenue (10R), Washington, DC 20420. E-mail: sharon.moss2@va.gov.