

From: Jeanne Lenzer <jeanne.lenzer@gmail.com>

Date: 24 June 2014

To: XXXXXXXX

Subject: Open Letter in Support of The BMJ

Dear XXXXXXXX

Following attacks on *The BMJ* approximately 500 doctors and others, including two Nobel laureates, have signed an Open Letter to Stand with *The BMJ*. At the suggestion of Ted Schrecker, Professor of Global Health Policy at Durham University and a leading researcher on the political economy of health policy, I would like to submit this as a letter to *[Journal]*, or alternatively, to write a commentary about the brouhaha that led up to the Open Letter and the larger issue of scientific integrity and attacks on medical journals and their editors. Or perhaps you would like to invite someone else to write a commentary?

The attack started over an error in an article in *The BMJ* on statins. This issue is discussed by Dr Fiona Godlee, [here](#). Sir Rory Collins has demanded not just a correction but full retraction of the article [claiming](#) the authors will be responsible for the deaths of patients and that their work is akin to the [fraudulent] work of Andrew Wakefield. Then he went even further and requested [government intervention](#). If you want to read about the specifics of the statins issue, a brief overview is attached.

Open Letter to Stand with *The BMJ*

The BMJ stands out among the top medical journals of the world as a beacon in the best tradition of science through its willingness to publish articles and studies that question orthodoxy. Many of these articles question the results of industry-funded research, and while *The BMJ* publishes its share of industry-funded research, it has also given space and voice to those who question the output of such studies, including those published by *The BMJ* itself. The journal was among the first to call for open access to clinical trial data, much of which is left unpublished, held secret or misanalysed. *The BMJ* became one of the first medical journals in history to establish a medical investigative unit geared to understanding when research data represent some of the true and valuable breakthroughs of medicine, and when they are part of the sad history of spin trumping real science.

"This willingness to give voice to careful skeptics, and to insist on data transparency, has triggered the ire of industry and the recipients of its largesse on more than one occasion, leading to accusations and threats against *The BMJ*. Now, *The BMJ* is being attacked once again, over a paper involving statins, that should not be retracted as demanded by its critics. *The BMJ* was correct in publishing the paper, and did what was necessary in correcting an error. We, as doctors, researchers, scientists, patient advocates, journalists and others from around the globe, want to stand with *The BMJ* in its effort to elevate scientific and honorable dialogue about the issues of the day."

500 Signatories – to be published at the [Lown Institute](#) website

Regards,
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