

FORMAL COMMENT

Incorporating equity, diversity, and inclusiveness into the Hong Kong Principles

David Moher^{1,2*}, Lex Bouter^{3,4}, Nicole Foeger⁵, Ulrich Dirnagl⁶

1 Centre for Journalology, Clinical Epidemiology Program, Ottawa Hospital Research Institute, Ottawa, Canada, **2** School of Epidemiology and Public Health, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada, **3** Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Amsterdam University Medical Centers, Amsterdam, the Netherlands, **4** Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Humanities, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, the Netherlands, **5** Austrian Agency for Research Integrity, Vienna, Austria, **6** Berlin Institute of Health, QUEST Center for Transforming Biomedical Research, Berlin, Germany

* dmoher@ohri.ca

We thank Ms. Labib and Dr. Evans for their work on the Hong Kong Principles (HKPs) [1]. Your letter raises important points and gives us an opportunity to respond and clarify our perspective. As you indicate in your letter, equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) are important topics that require attention in the assessment of researchers. We did not address them specifically in the HKPs because our main focus was on rewarding responsible research practices that improve the transparency and validity of research. As a clarification (and not to be interpreted as defensive on our part), EDI also wasn't mentioned prominently in our breakout discussions with more than 100 participants of the 6th World Conference on Research Integrity, where the draft HKPs were discussed and finalized.

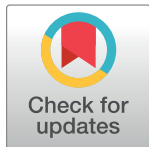
In our paper [2], Principle 5 (recognize essential other tasks like peer review and mentoring) provides a useful example that illustrates that the essence of the Labib and Evans comments about EDI are in alignment with our views—"Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia, has some exciting initiatives in their new academic promotion policy, which includes five pillars, one of which is in leadership and citizenship. Here, researchers can show their alignment with the university's values and broader contribution to the university and its community [87]. Since this policy was introduced, it has been reported that the number of promotion applications increased by 50%, and the number of women promoted has also increased [88]".

We think there will be an opportunity to more forcefully address EDI in the envisioned Cape Town Statement on Fostering Research Integrity through equity, fairness, and diversity (programmed as a focus track on the 7th World Conference on Research Integrity, Cape Town, South Africa, 2022). We can imagine that the Cape Town Statement will demand fostering EDI in research, including in the assessment of researchers for hiring, promotion, or tenure. We would see this as an update of the HKPs.

We are pleased that the HKPs has initiated discussion on EDI as part of the process of assessing researchers for hiring, promotion, and tenure. We look forward to collaborating with Labib and Evans and many others from the broad research integrity community to ensure that EDI will become part of the ecosystem of research integrity.

References

1. Labib K, Evans N. Gender, diversity, and the responsible assessment of researchers. *PLoS Biol.* 2021;19(4): e3001036. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.3001036>
2. Moher D, Bouter L, Kleinert S, Glasziou P, Sham MH, Barbour V, et al. The Hong Kong Principles for assessing researchers: Fostering research integrity. *PLoS Biol.* 2020; 18(7): e3000737. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.3000737> PMID: 32673304



OPEN ACCESS

Citation: Moher D, Bouter L, Foeger N, Dirnagl U (2021) Incorporating equity, diversity, and inclusiveness into the Hong Kong Principles. *PLoS Biol* 19(4): e3001140. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.3001140>

Received: January 8, 2021

Accepted: February 5, 2021

Published: April 27, 2021

Copyright: © 2021 Moher et al. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Funding: The author(s) received no specific funding for this work.

Competing interests: The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.