nations on the safety of blood, tissues, organs, and cells. The views expressed in this Comment are solely those of the authors and not of SaBTO. We declare no other competing interests.

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The *Lancet*–World Conferences on Research Integrity Foundation Commission on Research Integrity

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Progress in clinical medicine and public health to improve people's lives is based on research findings that should be relevant and trustworthy. However, around 3% of recent biomedical articles are fake publications, and this is increasing at an alarming rate due to the activities of paper mills and the newly emerging inappropriate use of generative artificial intelligence (AI).[1–3] About 4% of scientific articles have images (eg, of western blots) that are manipulated.[4] Possibly more than 4% of published articles meet the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) criteria for retraction; however, only 0·1–0·2% of these papers are retracted.[5,6] In a 2022 survey of 6813 academic researchers in the Netherlands, 4% of respondents admitted data fabrication and 4% admitted falsification.[7] Furthermore, 51% of the survey respondents had engaged frequently in at least one of 11 questionable research practices during the previous 3 years.[7] There is clearly a crisis in research integrity that needs urgent action by all involved.[8]

Research integrity refers to the principles and standards of research planning, conduct, and reporting.[9,10] Researchers and their behaviour determine the relevance, quality, and credibility of research findings.[11] This behaviour is largely driven by personal attitudes, professional norms and values, and institutional research environments.[12] Perverse incentives to cheat arise in an over-competitive research culture dominated by numbers of publications and citations and a funding landscape in which only a small proportion of applications are granted. In response to such incentives, there have been pleas to reduce reliance on bibliometric indicators, such as the journal impact factor and the Hirsch-index, and to reform researcher assessment.[13,14] But this explanation is probably too simplistic, since many other factors are also important such as the transparency of the research process, the

quality of research supervision, the presence of suitable checks and balances, and the availability of adequate training and facilities.

It is believed that the scientific endeavour is experiencing a replication crisis, and some philosophers have asked whether scientists can be trusted.[15–17] Yet several overlapping initiatives have been taken to improve the quality and credibility of the research record. During the past decade a number of organisations involved in research integrity, publication ethics, open science, and meta-research have worked towards improvement.[18,19] In January, 2025, a group of scientific sleuths published their call to action to tackle fake research.[20] There is no one magic bullet solution and a concerted effort by many stakeholders will be needed to substantially change matters.[21,22] The World Conferences on Research Integrity—which started in 2007 and will hold the 9th World Conference on Research Integrity in Vancouver, Canada, on May 3–6, 2026—bring these stakeholders together and offer a platform for all scholars and professionals interested in promoting responsible research practices.

Given the slow progress in strengthening research integrity and in changing the academic environment, together with emerging threats such as paper mills, generative AI, and political attacks on academic freedom, *The Lanc*et and the World Conferences on Research Integrity Foundation (WCRIF) are initiating a Commission on research integrity. This Commission will take a multifactor and multistakeholder approach and will work towards innovative solutions regarding the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of the issues that threaten the quality and credibility of research. A diverse range of academic experts and professionals from funders and publishers will reflect on the issues at hand, review what is known, collect new data when needed, and formulate actionable recommendations for the main stakeholders. All stakeholders need to collaborate in fostering research integrity and the *Lancet*–WCRIF Commission will provide evidence-based suggestions for doing so.

The World Conferences on Research Integrity Foundation (WCRIF) is a funder of this Commission. LB was the Chair of the WCRIF from 2017 to 2025 and is the Chair of the Steering Board of the Directing Body for Open Science (Open Science NL) of the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research. MHS has been a Board member of the WCRIF since 2019, reports travel and meeting support from the Association for the Promotion of Research Integrity, the WCRIF, and the Singapore Institutional Research Integrity Offices Network, and has served as a member of the Jury for the Einstein Foundation Award for Promoting Quality in Research since 2023. SK was a Board member of the WCRIF from 2017 to 2025 and is the Deputy Editor of *The Lancet* and Research Integrity and Risk Management Lead of The Lancet Group.

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