

How sloppy is our science?: an international study on inappropriate research behaviours

Erik Driessen, Department of Educational Development & Research, FHML, Maastricht University

12 February 2019

Sloppy science, sometimes referred to as questionable research practices (QRPs), wastes limited resources, misinforms policy, damages science, and provides a poor example for the research community, especially graduate students. Sloppy science practices include, but are not limited to, poor data management; inappropriate research design; insufficient respect and care for study participants; improper research design; careless analysis; and unsuitable authorship and publishing practices. While it seems black and white that researchers should avoid QRPs, an international survey of over 500 researchers found that 92% of respondents had engaged in one or more of these questionable practices. A second study on authorship identified that 51% of the authors felt that they had been experienced unethical pressure related to authorship order. These findings suggest the time is now for researchers to start talking about sloppy science and working together to propose collaborative strategies to address these questionable practices. In this lecture the results of the studies will be presented and possible approaches and solutions to mitigate sloppy science practices will be discussed.