


EDITORIAL

**Editorial: The Importance of Accurate Citations and References**

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A good deal of editorial time is spent in ensuring the accuracy and replicability of citations and references. Over the years, I have noted an increasing tendency to use internet sources in the manuscripts that are submitted for peer-review. It is easy to go to what should be a trusted site to get up to date statistics or publications on an identified health problem; however, if you relied on that data to build the case for research, you may be surprised to find that by the time you are writing your findings for publication, the source is no longer available or different data is discussed on a particular site. This problem was exacerbated in 2025 when it became more difficult to find previously available data and publications on several U. S. governmental sites. Some of the data has been restored or has been saved though the use of PDF documents; however, this disruption has been particularly difficult for novice writers who relied heavily on non-cached documents and data. Use of primary sources can help ensure that the reference remains available by the time you are writing research results.

I have recently seen some examples of phantom papers that are AI generated but cannot be found with normal means such as digital object identifiers (DOIs). If you are using an article in your writings; make sure you can read the actual article, and provide accurate information that allows others to find and read that source.

I believe the crux of the problem lies in that need to be able check and verify sources. As a young researcher, I had to physically go to the library to find articles or books. I encountered problems where a citation or reference had a minor error such as a misspelled name, incorrect publication date or other problem that cost me hours in trying to verify the information as I was writing grant applications or preparing manuscripts for submission. Today I can sit at my computer, and find a wealth of resources. However, with this improvement I believe, that authors continue to have a responsibility to verify the accuracy of citations and references.