

Crossref Publishers deliver win for clinical trial openness

Clinical trials data now linkable with publications

LYNNFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS, UNITED STATES, May 17, 2016 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A group of publishers today announced a development to uniquely identify each clinical trial and easily link to related publications for the first time. This will make it easier for health professionals to obtain all the necessary information relating to a clinical trial for their patients, and to ensure transparency for researchers.

The resulting initiative is the culmination of three years' collaboration between publishers, led by the open access publisher BioMed Central and Crossref, the not-for-profit membership organization who runs a shared scholarly infrastructure.

Daniel Shanahan, Associate Publisher at BioMed Central and Chair of the Working Group, said: "Clinical trials can result in a large number of separate publications, from study protocols through to the results articles and secondary analyses, published in many different journals, sometimes years apart.

"Researchers need access to all of these articles if they are to reliably evaluate bias or selective reporting in the study. Identifying and centrally linking all articles related to each individual clinical trial is imperative, and publishers have an important part to play in ensuring researchers can find the information they need easily."

This development means that clinical trial numbers (CTNs) can now be linked up with Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs). The information is available through Crossref's open API and delivered through their CrossMark service, which also allows publishers to highlight key information, such as funding sources and retractions. Publisher members deposit metadata with Crossref, who accepts CTNTRNs from the sixteen trial registries endorsed by the World Health Organization (WHO).

"Crossref's mission is to solve precisely this kind of problem, we aim to improve research communications by connecting multiple parties and their metadata" explained Kirsty Meddings, the Product Manager responsible for delivering this. "It's exciting to see clinical trial info starting to come in. We know from experience that new metadata requests have to start somewhere but we will quickly see a snowball effect as hundreds of other biomedical publishers make the necessary upgrades to their workflows."

James Cockerill, Campaigns Manager, Sense About Science, co-founders of the #AllTrials campaign: "Doctors need all of the evidence to make good decisions. With efforts ongoing to get all clinical trials, past, present and future, registered and their results reported, convenient ways to find information become more important. Linking clinical trials to their published papers is a welcome development. Journals and publishers of clinical trials should do everything they can to get their full back-catalogue into this system."

Quick Facts:

Three-year effort led by BioMedCentral and Crossref bridges the gap between the initial publication of clinical trial registration to the later publications and secondary analyses

Health professionals and researchers will now have easy, open access to all the published content related to a clinical trial via the Crossref CrossMark dialogue box

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About Crossref

We are Crossref, a not-for-profit membership organization for scholarly publishing working to make content easy to find, link, cite, and assess. We do it in five ways: rallying the community; tagging metadata; running a shared infrastructure; playing with new technology; and making tools and services to improve research communications.

About BioMed Central

BioMed Central is an STM (Science, Technology and Medicine) publisher which has pioneered the open access publishing model. All peer-reviewed articles published by BioMed Central are made immediately and freely accessible online, and are licensed to allow redistribution and reuse. BioMed Central is part of Springer Nature, the world's largest academic book publisher, publisher of the world's most influential journals and a pioneer in the field of open research

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