



### The Sins of Omission

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#### Abstract

Writing in the field of oncology, be it writes or scholarly papers, should be as precise as possible. On the other hand, the proper presentation of a particular problem may require a lengthy line of reasoning. Thus, a compromise between space constraints and precision may present itself as the obvious solution to this quandary. With the advent of supplementary information and electronic journals, space restrictions are almost obsolete, provided the managing editor allows for a lengthy and generous text. Here, we argue in favor of the notion that a lengthy version of a paper be presented in the collection of supplemental data if the journal itself does not provide a platform for such endeavors.

#### Discussion

Considering the history of writing, one cannot fail to notice text-based religions. By choosing a phrase out of the common text employed by Judaism and Christianity, maintenance of the “textual *status quo*” to secure the “stability for a religious tradition” in Deuteronomy Chapter 4, Verse 2 (abbreviated as Deut. 4:2) can be likened as a good example for a well-defined point of reference (see [1] and references therein as a guide to further sources). If one is permitted to extend the above-introduced term “stability” to the concept of scholarly rigor, the old and venerable tradition of transmitting texts in religions may illustrate the significance of maintaining the integrity of information over a considerable period of time. All this, of course, is true if one is permitted to take the above-referenced “textual status quo” (see ref [2] as a guide to further reading on the textual transmission). We shall, however, not engage in this debate and use the command of Deut 4:2 as an example of maintained “textual status quo” over a reasonably long period of time. Using this convenient example of a well preserved point of reference, one is encouraged to maintain the point(s) of reference(s), be it the *religious text* in religions or *primary*

*data* in clinical and experimental oncology, and clearly separating source material from *exegesis* (in theology) or *discussion* (in oncology). We wish to, again, reiterate the importance of a verifiable line of evidence (source material) and accompanying discussion throughout the entire life cycle of scholarly record.

Regardless of whether most scholarly papers are written using a technique termed “hedging” [3,4], selective referencing of earlier work is reported to contribute to improper spending of taxpayer’s money [5]. Whether this bias in selecting earlier work was the result of “willful neglect” (ref [6] offers a definition of this term) cannot be determined here, and we assume, charitably, that the reported incidences were the result of honest mistakes.

The undeniable fact that there is now a record in the scholarly canon arguing strongly that improper referencing of source material, be it in the form of selective referencing or, by implication, placing trust on scholarly papers that over-extend the significance of primary data presented in the study, let alone the possibility of selective publication of raw material, we use this opportunity for making the case to publish raw data sets (see ref [7] as an example for an existing line of reasoning that shall not be repeated here).

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