

(5.2) Representation of manuscript review status

You are preparing to give a presentation on your research at an upcoming major national meeting. In your presentation, you intend to reference data within a manuscript that was recently submitted for peer-reviewed publication by your group. The manuscript had previously been accepted pending minor revisions, and last week you submitted a revised version of the manuscript that you feel satisfactorily addressed all of the reviewer comments. In your approaching talk, you wish to cite this submitted work, believing that the presented data will seem more credible to the audience if the audience is aware of the submitted manuscript's current status. Accordingly, at the bottom of the relevant slide in your talk, you provide the title and first author of the submitted manuscript, along with the journal title, and identify the manuscript as "in press." Is this an acceptable course of action?

Commentary

It is important that the slides for the talk accurately represent to the audience the status of the work. Portraying the manuscript as having received final acceptance deceives the audience and takes credit for an outcome that has not yet been obtained. Even if a provisional acceptance has been provided by the journal and you feel confident that the article will eventually be accepted, a possibility remains that the article will not in fact be accepted, or that the editors and reviewers will request additional revisions that may impact the findings that you will present at the meeting. Therefore, it is unprofessional to misrepresent the data to the audience as having successfully undergone the peer-review process and as having received final acceptance.

In the present case, you must identify a manner of referencing your submitted work that accurately conveys its status to the audience. The term "in press" should be reserved exclusively for articles that have received a final and full acceptance from a journal and thus is not appropriate in the described context. Alternatively, you may consider characterizing the data as being "unpublished," "under review," or "in revision." You should take caution in accurately portraying the status of the work not just in this particular lecture, but also within other forms of communication. For instance, within your CV or even in informal communications during interviews for residency, fellowship, or post-training career positions, you should not represent a manuscript that is currently under review or under revision as being accepted or within press, as doing so would likewise take credit for an outcome that has not yet been achieved and thereby deceive the reader.

References

- 1) Sekas G, Hustson WR. Misrepresentation of academic accomplishments by applicants for gastroenterology fellowships. *Ann Intern Med* 1995;123:38-41.
- 2) Mushlin SB, Katz JT. Academic integrity: "accepted," "in press," or unacceptable? *Acad Med* 2013;88:1598-9.