Correspondence

Mandate ethics methods in papers

We call for a commitment to ethical reproducibility in biomedical research that would require detailed reporting of research-ethics methods in published scientific reports. We see this as an essential complement to scientific reproducibility.

The current ethics-review system does not make information openly available (E. J. Emanuel *et al. Ann. Intern. Med.* **141,** 282–291; 2004). Furthermore, the only explicit guidelines for ethics reporting are those issued by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors in its 'Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts'. Few papers actually follow these (S. Schroter *et al. J. Med. Ethics* **32,** 718–723; 2006).

Incorporating details of research-ethics methods into biomedical papers as standard procedure will promote efficient, cost-effective ethics practices and improve the credibility and accountability of research.

James A. Anderson, Marleen Eijkholt, Judy Illes *National Core for Neuroethics, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada.*
jilles@mail.ubc.ca

Patients' research priorities get funded

We are pleased to report evidence of a sea change in how medical research is supported in the United Kingdom. A major clinical research funder is commissioning studies of four of the top ten schizophrenia research questions prioritized by patients, carers and clinicians last year using the James Lind Alliance priority-setting process (see go.nature.com/u2cqcy and *Nature* **474,** 277–278; 2011).

The Health Technology Assessment programme of the National Institute for Health Research funds rigorous and independent research into the effectiveness of health-care technologies relevant to the UK National Health Service (NHS). The schizophrenia questions that the programme will investigate are: how to improve management of the weight gain and sexual dysfunction that is associated with medication; how to manage people whose schizophrenia is unresponsive to treatment; and how to recognize early signs of relapse.

James Lind Alliance partnerships ensure that the views of patients and others outside academia and industry are heard when setting research priorities. From April 2013, the alliance will be coordinated from within the NHS (see go.nature.com/twhvxz). This is an important further step towards incorporating patient, carer and clinician priorities in the wider activities of policy-makers and research funders.

Keith Lloyd, Jo White *Swansea University, Swansea, UK.*
k.r.lloyd@swansea.ac.uk
Iain Chalmers *James Lind Library, The James Lind Initiative, Oxford, UK.*

More medieval clues to cosmic-ray event

Jonathon Allen quotes an entry in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* that might account for the increased cosmic-ray flux in AD 774–775 (*Nature* **486,** 473; 2012). Other medieval texts recall another celestial phenomenon from around the same time, which may or may not be pertinent.

In the context of Charlemagne's campaign against the Saxons, the annals of the monastery of Lorsch, Germany (*Annales Laurissenses*), mention an image witnessed in AD 776 as "two shields burning with red colour and moving above the church itself". The *Chronicon* of Sigebert of Gembloux notes that "when the Saxons besieged the castle of Heresburch, the glory of God appeared to all, surely as two shields burning with the colour of blood and making certain motions through the air, as if at war". The phenomenon seems to have been observed during the day, suggesting that it was very bright if indeed it was a cosmic event.

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* also describes a heavenly red crucifix, a colour that is a traditional motif of battle-related portents. The date disparity between the shield sighting and the AD 774–775 event might be explained by an extended period of auroral activity. Also, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* entry is linked to the Battle of Otford, thought to have occurred in AD 776.

Gary W. Gibbons *University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK.*
Marcus C. Werner *University of Tokyo, Kashiwa, Japan.*
marcus.werner@ipmu.jp

Political backing to save the Baltic Sea

As Daniel Conley points out, reducing nutrient input is the most important measure for rescuing the Baltic Sea from eutrophication (*Nature* **486,** 463–464; 2012). But its restoration also depends strongly on political support. With ecological models indicating that recovery could take 50–100 years, such support must continue for decades. This will happen only if accompanied by evidence of steady progress.

The Baltic Sea's nutrient load can be reduced by improving agricultural practices, but huge nutrient stores in the soils will slow progress. Yet the European Union wants high water quality to be achieved by 2015 in coastal waters (Water Framework Directive) and by 2020 in open sea areas (Marine Directive).

Patience is not enough: we need ways to accelerate recovery and early demonstrations of improved water quality, at least in some enclosed coastal waters. There has been some progress near Stockholm after upgrades to sewage treatment, even as conditions deteriorated in the open Baltic Sea.

The foundation BalticSea2020 (www.balticsea2020.org/english) will reduce land-based nutrient inputs to a eutrophic bay in the Stockholm archipelago and use aluminium chloride to increase phosphorus binding by the bay's hypoxic sediments. This will reduce nutrient levels and algal production within years. Submerged vegetation and spawning sites for predatory fish will also be restored.

Such timely local recoveries could help to sustain political support for nutrient reductions for long enough to save the Baltic Sea.

Ragnar Elmgren* *Stockholm University, Sweden.*
ragnar.elmgren@ecology.su.se
**On behalf of 4 co-authors (for a full list, see go.nature.com/iefbcy).*

Open access: hard on lone authors

Nowhere in your discussion on the future of author payments for open-access publication (*Nature* **486,** 439; 2012) do you mention the predicament of the independent researcher or, for that matter, the scholar who is not funded by grants. I trust that the authors of the Finch report have borne this in mind.

Otherwise, the paywalls that prevent free access to knowledge for those who are not members of a university or other academic library will merely be replaced by article-publishing charges that prevent them from making a contribution.

Christopher Smith *Birmingham, UK. c.u.m.smith@googlemail.com*

CONTRIBUTIONS

Correspondence may be sent to **correspondence@nature.com** after consulting the author guidelines at **go.nature.com/cmchno**.