MCRs: Squeezed and pushed aside

Noriko Cable, PhD
Senior Research Fellow
UCL
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MCR careers: My case

- Entry: A clinical psychiatric nurse (ADN) in Japan
- PhD in the US
- Married and moved to the UK
- Maternity break -> the first employment:
  - Change of the discipline: Nursing -> Epidemiology
- Research careers plus:
  - Teaching
  - Public engagement (i.e. impact)
  - International collaborative work
  - Mentoring
  - Enabling
MCR life: My view+

- Interdisciplinary focus
  - Where/How to fit in
  - Is my niche good/interesting enough?
- Never ending ‘to do’ list
- REF
  - The power of citation index (i.e. h-index)
  - What is ’REF-able’?
- Diminishing opportunities
  - Against time
  - Once gone, never come back
MCRs are squeezed. What can we do about this?

• Never ending the ‘to do' list
  – Referee invitations
    • Can we ease it? – More rigorous check before sending to peer review. Streamlined review process to reduce numbers of reviews on the same manuscript.
    • Fast turn around – Expected to report within 2 weeks (on the top of normal job???)
• Proper recognition – Awards, certificate that can be used on CV. How Publons working? Could it be automated?
• What is going on with the paid referee system? Who gets selected and how?
• Why I get more invitations from certain journals, but not from the others?
–Paper publications

• Process – Takes in approx. 1yr. Could be speeded up?

• Power of referees – some comments are not appropriate. How could we be more fairer?

• Power of the Chief editors – quick dismissal, no places to appeal
MCRs are squeezed. What can we do about this?

• REF
  – Citation index - current system does not regard the orders of authors, favouring a large research group/network i.e. co-authorships
  – Politics of publication and citation
    • Is including a well-known person really matter? How much?
    • Power of the Chief Editor(s) – How could they be so certain and how decision is objectively made?
Risks of publishing sister journals

• Denied publication in Main journal, but offered to be published in their sister journal(s)
• Getting published: GOOD
• BUT, Ending up no visibilities
My suggestion to publishers

• Fair and transplant system – visible to all
• Promotion of the published work
  – Editor’s choice is good. Altimetric OK
    • To be cited, how? – Could we share?
  – Knowledge broking: e-library across publishers, tabulated by areas/themes
  – Promoting sister journals
    • Could open access fee be waived? Invite featured work?
• Any opportunities for aspiring and capable MCRs?
  – Public engagement events: Expanding readership
  – Bringing academic and publishers together
    • Co-producing knowledge e.g. joint blog, debates
  – A short term project grant (100K?) for bridging.
Thank you for listening
For questions/collaboration send e-mail to:

n.cable@ucl.ac.uk

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