GENETICS

BIAS AGAINST NEGATIVE STUDIES

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We probably all agree that a publication bias against negative studies will severely distorts our opinion. To repeat an earlier Nature letter

Why negatives should be viewed as positives ... This filtering of results undoubtedly biases the information available to scientists (see, for example "Null and void" Nature 422, 554â€"555; 2003). And communication is at the heart of science.

Here is an email that I received from the editor of Immunogenetics Ronald Bontrop (pp D. Devine – sender did not decline publication here)

I'm sorry to disappoint you a second time, but I stand by my original decision.

The three main reasons for this are:

- 1. None of the references cite Immunogenetics;
- 2. The journal no longer publishes negative associations;
- 3. The manuscript does not comply with the criteria set out by Manly (2005) Reliability of statistical associations between genes and disease. Immunogenetics 57: 549-558.

Whatever you think about argument 1. or 3., argument 2. should lead to a boycott of this journal.

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