

**If possible please follow this fictitious example of an abstract.**

## **Threat of legal action broke censorship at Trustworthy Systematic Reviews**

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**Background:** It can be difficult to get unwelcome results published.

**Objectives:** To describe the avoidance mechanisms employed by the editors and journal owners when they refused to publish a paper they had accepted.

**Methods:** We got access to 17 clinical study reports (5,673 patients) and raw individual, anonymised patient data from Utopistan's Drug Agency describing placebo-controlled randomised trials of marvelloxetine in patients with depression and compared them with trial publications.

**Results:** We found 6 suicide attempts and 2 acts of violence in 8 patients on the drug versus none on placebo ( $P = 0.008$ ). None of these were mentioned in the corresponding published trial reports. Our paper was accepted for publication in Trustworthy Systematic Reviews, a journal owned by Elsewhere, on March 6, 2019. A year later, it had still not been published, although the journal promises publication within 20 days of acceptance. Our email correspondence took up 66 pages, and we had been given a total of 20 apologies and a variety of odd, contradictory, and implausible reasons for why our paper had not yet been published. During that year, the journal had published 309 papers. On February 16, 2020, we wrote to Elsewhere that "We consider this scientific censorship that borders on scientific misconduct and fraud. We have a big network with renowned scientists, many connections with the international media, and a strong social media presence. If Elsewhere fails to publish our paper before the end of the month, we are obliged to alarm our fellow scientists and the international and social media about Elsewhere's editorial practices. We have paid for open access and will involve lawyers if our deadline is not met." Elsewhere published our review on the last day of our 12-day deadline.

**Conclusion:** In cases of censorship, a threat of legal action can be effective.

300 words

**Conflicts of interest:** AW once had a dog named Happy that she loved very much, which suffered from severe separation anxiety. After a veterinarian had prescribed marvelloxetine for Happy, he died.

Butt Y Whistleblower's doctoral thesis from 1990 was about fraud in drug trials. In 1993, he co-founded Trusted Evidence and was elected for its Governing Board twice. In 2018, he was expelled from the board and the organisation after he had documented that many of the systematic reviews Trusted Evidence had published were unreliable and that there had been serious tampering with the board's meeting minutes.

Both authors have approved the abstract.