



**Elisabeth Bik** ✓ @elisabethbik.bsky.social · 14d

Good morning from Vancouver, on Day 3 of the  
[@wcrifoundation.bsky.social](#)

With Gengyan Tang, "Producing Papers, Fabricating Science: Paper Mills in China"

Research on paper mills poses ethical challenges (undercover identity, data access challenges, legal constraints)

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❤️ 26



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GT: I used court documents and investigative news reports to collect and analyze data. Most ghostwriters are majoring in English in poor economic situations, and payment is on a per-order basis.

The paper mills are independent private companies, who sign formal contracts with students.

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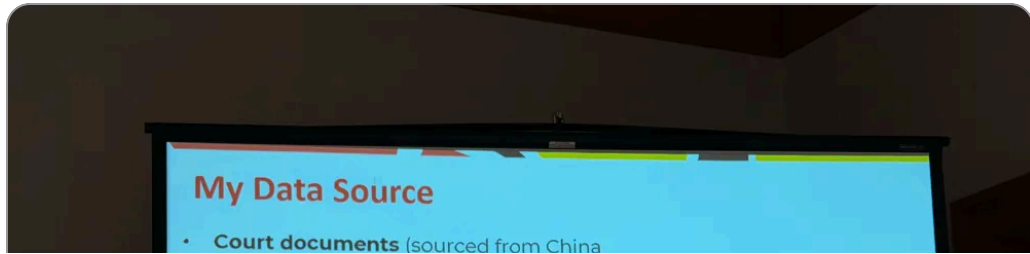
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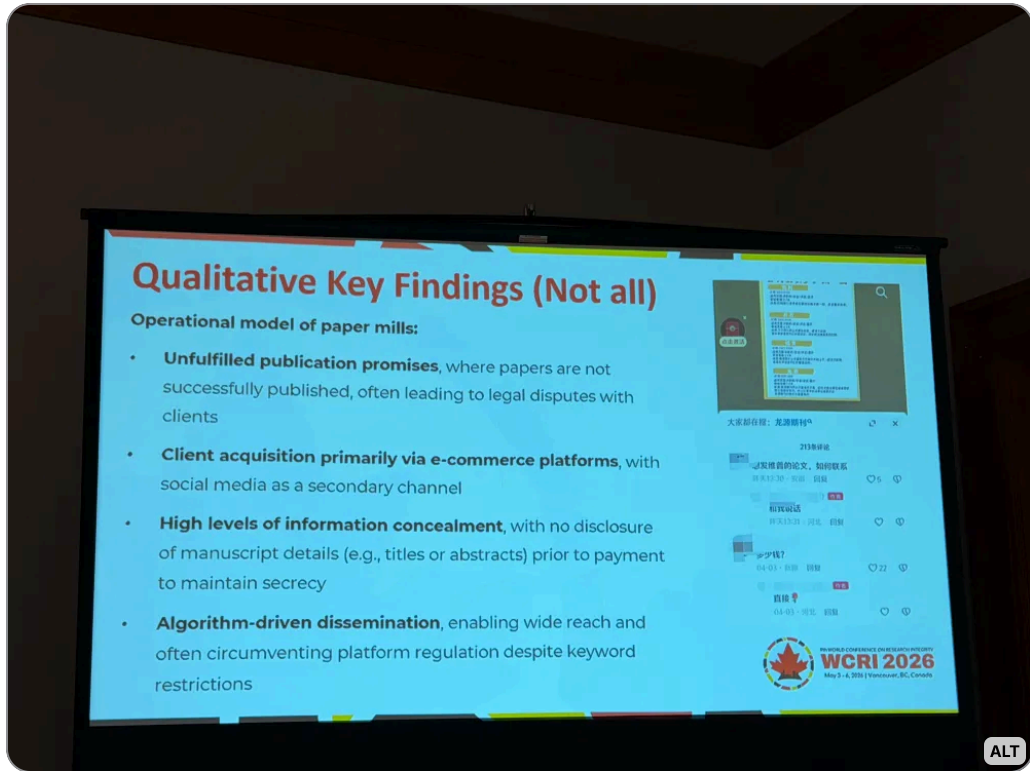
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GT: Sometimes, legal disputes with clients, when papers are not successfully published. Social media used to voice concerns. Clients are mainly physicians (county/municipal level hospitals) and students. Silence after victimization. Paper mills are shaped by broader structural factors. #WCRI2026



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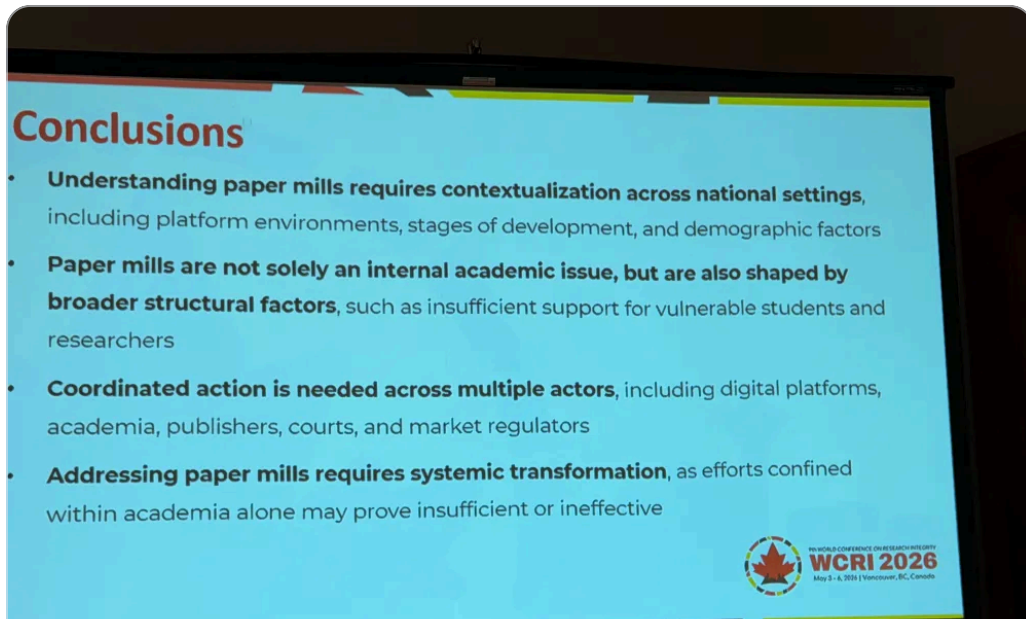
GT: Coordinated action is needed across multiple actors. Addressing paper mills requires systemic transformation. Discussion: The clinicians need to publish - this is why they use paper mills. How much do we contribute to this system? Let's doctors focus on their clinical work. #WCRI2026



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Next: Colby Vorland with "AI-Assisted Integrity Checks: Initial Validation Results From the INSPECT-AI Tool for Retraction and Trial Registration in Randomized Controlled Trials"

Checking trials for integrity issues to find concerns, because retracted trials can be influential.

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CV: The INSPECT-SR is a 21-check Cochrane-endorsed manual framework for judging whether CRT data and findings are trustworthy enough to synthesize.

[www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1...](http://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1...)

INSPECT-AI: Reviewer-facing software that semi-automates INSPECT-SR checks, final judgment with the reviewer

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## What is INSPECT-SR?

A 21-check Cochrane-endorsed manual framework for judging whether RCT data and findings are trustworthy enough to synthesize.

INSPECT-SR domain	checks	example check
Post-publication notices	3	Associated retraction or expression of concern
Conduct, governance, transparency	5	Timing or absence of trial registration
Text and figures	2	Manipulated or duplicated figures
Results in the study	11	implausible baseline data or internally inconsistent results

**INSPECT-SR: a tool for assessing trustworthiness of randomised controlled trials**

Jack Wilkinson, Cahin Haid, Ella Fleming, Georgina A. Antoniou, Tony Aburto, Zarin Abureze, Alison Ansell, Virginia Barbour, Vincenzo Berghello, Dorothy V FL Bishop, Emma F Bunting, Nicholas J L Brown, Jess Christopher, Peter Clarke, Doreen Daly, Jane Dennis, Patrick Dickson, Jo Dumville, Helen Franklin, Andrew Gray, Sarah Girdlestone, Lisa C. Gunn, Jill A. Hayden, James A J. Hetherington, Kyle E Hunter, Ian Hunter, Lulu Jiang, Emily Lam, Rory J. Lawton, Sarah Lomas, Tingting Li, Wenhao Li, Junping Liu, Elizabeth Loder, Andrew Lunn, Gudrun Peyerwieser, Katie, Rui W. Pei, Florian Naudel, Anna Naudel-Saint, Neil E. O'Connell, Lisa Parker, Rita E. Paulberg, Barbara K. Radwin, Rachel Richardson, Anna Lena Seidler, Kyle Sheldrick, Emma Sydes, Helen van Wageningen, Colby J. Mortland, Rui Wang, Stephanie Weber, Matthias Weir, Lisa Berry, James J. Githam

doi: <https://doi.org/10.1101/2025.09.03.25134905>

This article is a preprint and has not been peer-reviewed (what does this mean?). It reports new medical research that has yet to be evaluated and so should not be used to guide clinical practice.

INSPECT-SR preprint: monthJuly 2025.09.03.25134905

**How systematic reviewers should use it**  
Responses to each check feed domain and study judgements before risk-of-bias assessment.

INSPECT-SR checklist  
Visit <https://inspect.sr>

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CV: Validation: We compared each automated output (INSPECT-AI) with manually reconciled reference standard.

The semi-automated AI tool keeps reviewer judgment central. Checks retractions, registration status, registry identifier, registration date. Reviewer confirms before it counts.

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## Takeaway

Semi-automate the repeatable checks; keep reviewer judgement central.

<p><b>Checks implemented and validated</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Associated retraction.</li> <li>- Registration status.</li> <li>- Registry identifier.</li> <li>- Registration date.</li> <li>- Reference integrity checks.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Checks in progress</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Baseline table checks.</li> <li>- Publication-registry comparison (in collaboration with Jamie Cummins and RegCheck).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reviewer-verified</b></p> <p>Tool surfaces evidence or a suggested value; reviewer confirms before it counts.</p>
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Thank you

Bottom line: INSPECT-AI reduces repetitive lookup and extraction work while reserving expert effort for ambiguous evidence.

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Feedback



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Next: Baptiste Vendé with "From Hypothesis to Evidence: A Systematic Review of Research Misconduct Determinants and a Critical Typology of the Methods Employed to find them"

DAG analysis: a visualization tool to show relationships

[I am not quite understanding the topic of this talk]

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1 [reply icon] [retweet icon] [heart icon] [bookmark icon] [share icon] [more icon]



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BV:

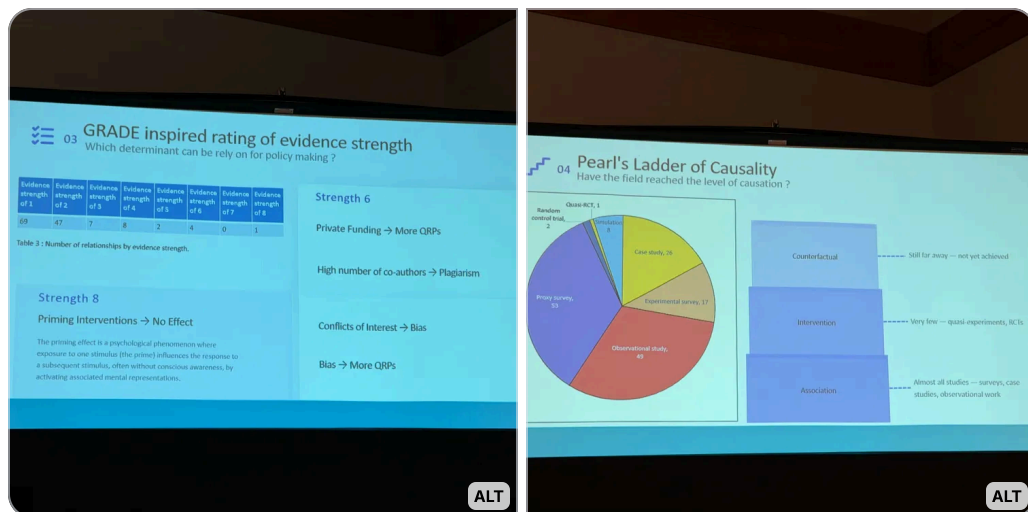
\* GRADE inspired rating of evidence strength

\* Pearl's ladder of causality

[unclear which relationship/causality is tested; just posting the screenshots here]

Conclusion: The literature is broad but not yet deep enough to anchor policy. A structured map of evidence now exists.

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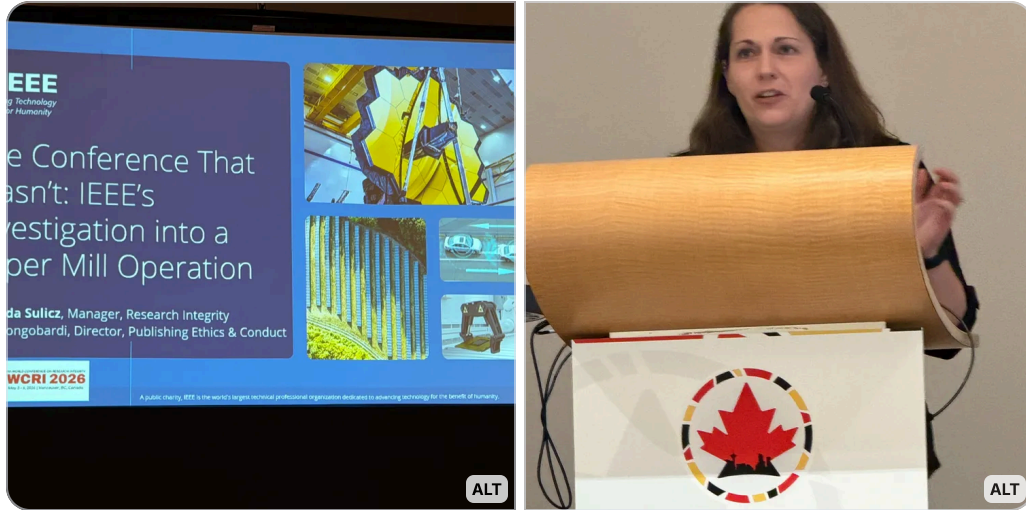


Feedback



Next: Amanda Sulicz from IEEE, with "The Conference That Wasn't: IEEE's Investigation into a Paper Mill Operation"  
 In 2024, IEEE created committee of volunteers to address conference publication quality.  
 ICOCWC: a routine plagiarism complaint prompted a large scale investigation.

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 AS: The ICOCWC conference was in Ethiopia, but almost all papers were from India. We received templated responses.  
 Peer review: all articles had exactly 3 reviewers, not one reviewer rejected an article.  
 The main organizer is associated with paper mills, as found by Anna Abalkina.  
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Next: Michael Streeter, Wiley, with "Research Integrity Screening and Resolutions - An Adaptive, Interventional Approach"  
Our research integrity structure: Policy development and external engagement, integrity assurance and case resolution, technology and screening.  
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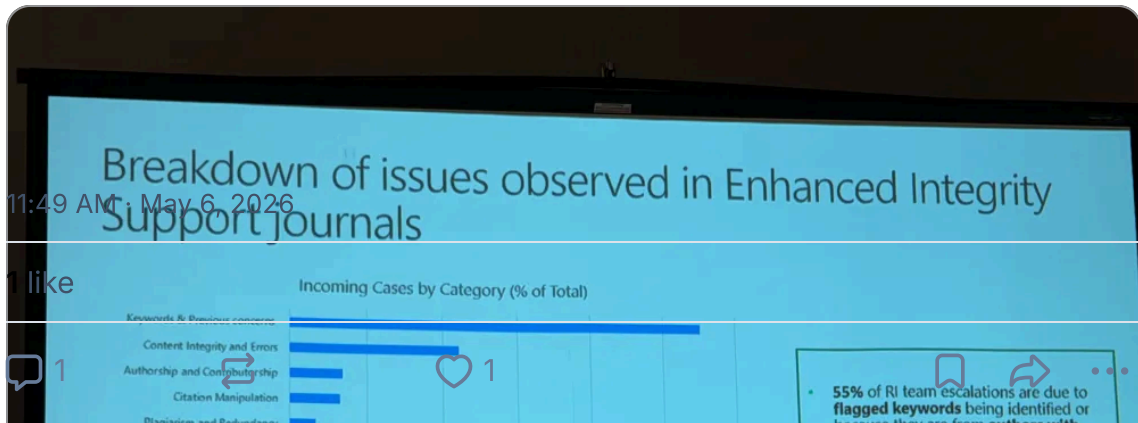
MS: We respond to allegations received through different channels, but also screen for all kinds of misconduct and ethics issues. Most issues involve flagged keywords [?] or authors with prior concerns. We are also looking into issues with peer review reports (e.g. text similarity, time)  
[#WCRI2026](#)



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Write your reply



**Zen Faulkes** @doctorzen.net · 14d  
What is a "flagged keyword" in this context? #WCRI2026

1 comment   Retweet   Like   Bookmark   Share   More



**Elisabeth Bik** @elisabethbik.bsky.social · 13d  
I did not get that either , sorry!

1 comment   Retweet   Like   Bookmark   Share   More



**Zen Faulkes** @doctorzen.net · 13d  
No worries! I was hoping someone else from the conference might see the hashtag.

1 Like   Retweet   Bookmark   Share   More



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Feedback

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