

February 3, 1996

Dr. Richard Horton
42 Bedford Square
London WC1B 3SL
United Kingdom

Dear Dr. Horton.

I read the essay 'Revising the research record' with much interest and sympathy. As editor of *Convulsive Therapy*, no problems of scientific error have been brought to my attention. Our level of error has been at a more trifling level, and so we have not been faced with the difficult decision as how to alert the readers to scientific error. I am impressed that the Table 'Taxonomy of error' in your essay reflects the best standard available today.

Since a published report has gone through the journal's peer review, when error is found or charged, it seems logical to go through the same procedures to establish error. Assuming the review concludes that error of fact or procedure occurred, such conclusions warrant publication. The suggested '*withdrawal of aegis*' by the journal is a reasonable and innovative step in maintaining scientific integrity. The principal downside risk is the assurance that the material presented the readers in the '*withdrawal of aegis*' be complete and able to withstand procedural and legal scrutiny. The guidelines for authors should reflect the possibility of such review of published material and the possibility of such published revision.

Should you wish a publisher's point of view, Dr. Alan Edelson, the founder of Raven Press and the former President of Lippincott may be able to answer an inquiry more formally than I [amedelson@aol.com; or 16 Washington Avenue, Irvington NY 10533].

Incidentally, I have stepped down as Editor of *Convulsive Therapy*, but am still interested in the problems of editing and editors.

My regards.

Sincerely yours,

Max Fink, M.D.
Professor of Psychiatry
and Neurology