

constraints".<sup>5</sup> When the transfer of such authority is to a for-profit company, these constraints are every bit as worrisome as undue influence on journal content.

Unfortunately, the report 10 years ago that criticised the CMA for firing its editors<sup>2</sup> has had only a temporary influence. Despite the protection of the editor by the Journal Oversight Committee that was introduced back then, this time the CMA has abrogated its own policy. The CMA has failed to heed the concerns of the Journal Oversight Committee and by dismissing it has silenced dissent, opting to hear no more arguments about plans to place the management of the journal under a for-profit corporation, to allow the CMA President to make content requests of the editor, and to eliminate expert professional supervision. Given its track record on promises, the CMA's offer to convene a CMA task force to review all aspects of the CMAJ's performance should provide little comfort.<sup>3</sup>

Regrettably, the CMA seems to have learned nothing about publishing a quality journal. Regrettably, few members of the CMA have been outspoken with regard to the action of their leaders. Regrettably, leaders of Canadian academic medicine have largely failed to exert their influence. Regrettably, the CMAJ Editorial Board

Members did not resign immediately in protest, planning to meet again sometime in the future. If there had been widespread protests, the new for-profit company and the CMA officers might have discovered how much their medical journal is cherished, how important it is to preserve oversight that deters arbitrary unilateral action, and how difficult it is to publish a quality medical journal. Perhaps then the CMA would have learned a lesson.

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I was a member of the CMAJ's Journal Oversight Committee from 2014 to 2016 and I am Editor-in-Chief Emeritus of *The New England Journal of Medicine*. I declare no other competing interests.

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## Expression of concern—Tracheobronchial transplantation with a stem-cell-seeded bioartificial nanocomposite: a proof-of-concept study

On Nov 24, 2011, *The Lancet* published a research article on tracheobronchial transplantation with a stem-cell-seeded bioartificial nanocomposite.<sup>1</sup> 3 years later, several of the authors, together with others, raised concerns about the validity of this work. The Karolinska Institute launched an investigation led by Professor Bengt Gerdin into papers on the development of the technique. Gerdin's report was followed by a second evaluation that largely cleared concerns regarding *The Lancet* paper. More recently, a documentary series on Swedish television again cast doubt on this work and precipitated public uncertainty about the research from Karolinska. There are now several new investigations into various aspects of the research carried out at Karolinska and the outcomes

of the investigation pertinent to *The Lancet* paper are awaited. Meanwhile, several authors have now distanced themselves from the work to which they originally assigned their names. In view of the ongoing uncertainty about the integrity of the work reported in this paper, and after discussion with the lead author of the research article, Dr Paolo Macchiarini, we now issue an expression of concern about the paper, while reserving a final decision for when current investigations are completed.

*The Lancet* Editors

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