

Ground Hog's Day

Supercourse Newsletter  
February 1, 2007

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Important issues for the Day, Ground Hog day again, Appreciation of the Supercourse, Supercourse transforming Global Health? The best web site ever and is Nature a Scientific Journal? Plus the Lecture of the week.

Please forward this newsletter to people who you think might be interested.

Ground Hog day: Today is the day that the world looks to my state, Pennsylvania, to determine the future weather conditions globally. This is concept of Ground Hog's day:

If the groundhog saw his shadow on Groundhog Day there would be six more weeks of winter. If he didn't, there would be 42 more days of winter.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ground\\_Hog%27s\\_Day](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ground_Hog%27s_Day) . This year will be of even more significance. We have developed Ground Hog skin sensors to assess the degree of perspiration. We believe that this may give important insight into the prediction of global warming.

Cool Note: We receive many nice notes like this one. This one is very kind, thanks doug.

THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

the SUPERCOURSE is like a cool drink in a HOT, PARCHED land!!!

RON is surely meeting a HUGE CHUNK of the needs "in the trenches", and i happen to be in about as abysmal a place as can be imagined.

again, so GRATEFUL to you!

my best, doug soderdahl, Madagascar

Global Grover Supercourse Lecture:

We have discovered something extremely important and want your thoughts. The Supercourse can change the field of Global Health. Faina started to put together the Supercourse lecture of Global health. The approach is like her Golden Lecture of prevention which reached 136 countries <http://www.pitt.edu/~super1/lecture/lec10511/index.htm>. She will use slides from many of your lectures plus new ones to produce a Supercourse Global health lecture. She searched the web to find lectures available on global and international health to see their perspective. There were virtually none taking our approach towards global health. Isn't that fascinating? It struck me in the middle of the night what this will mean.

We plan to reach EVERY Faculty person and Student in Medical student in the world annually with single lectures on global health taught by their faculty. The minds of these students at this point for global health is "Global Health Tabula Rosa" (a blank slate). Currently any training in global health world wide is likely <1%. We will provide at least some training each year to at least 75% of the 320,000 students. These students in 10 years will be leaders in their communities, Science, nation and world in global health.

Putting these facts together, we are present a new model of global health, we will educate all the students in the world about this model. In 10 years, the model of the Supercourse will transform global health. It is scary, but it will happen.

What do you think?

We need your thoughts about your country, and your school joining. We hope to hear soon if we can evolve this into a PAHO/WHO project. We would also seek university and corporate sponsorship to make this happen. We would appreciate your thoughts as to what Universities or corporations could sponsor this. We also are thinking of developing Satellite centers who would coordinate activities within each countries, are you interested.

Please write any comments back directly to me ([ronlaporte@aol.com](mailto:ronlaporte@aol.com)). This is a project for the world.

The most cool web site ever...

Professor Wang Ke-An was the Director of the Chinese Academy of Preventive Medicine. He told me a very important saying. I think it was from Confucius. He said "Epidemiologists love Maps". I would add one more thing, Epidemiologists also love M & Ms, Maps and Monitoring. Nothing is more exciting than seeing epidemic curves that start out in Beijing and jump to Bonn, Bolivia, and Buffalo. It makes one's heart start pound. If you love M & M, you will love this site: <http://www.seaturtle.org/>

In this site you can track 1000s of sea turtles that have been tagged to see where they are and where they are going. You can see where the turtles are distributed all over the world. Also, you can get personally attached to individual turtles by web cams, so that you can see Kermit the Turtle on the bottom of the India Ocean, Big Turtle in Guam, or Hiroshi the Turtle in the China Sea. Life would be so much simpler for epidemiology if we were all born with a disease sensor and GIS system in our necks. (only kidding again), but this site is so beautiful, and give sense of harmony of global health work for humans and animals united.

Sticking it to Biomedical Journals

As we have told you over the past few years we have been having great fun poking fun at the Major Journals. Nature, Science, BMJ, NEJM, Lancet, PLOS, PNAS are a bit pompous, aren't they? We published a series of articles beginning in 1995 titled "The Death of Biomedical Journals" in the BMJ, which these billion dollar companies did not see to like. Strange.

Here is the latest, Enjoy, and we would love your comments:

1 February 2007

Is Nature a Peer Reviewed Scientific Journal?

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Sir: Giles reported on PLOS (4 Jan. 2007, pg. 9) with a negative tone about its review process as PLOS sends each report to one of 200 external editors for review. "Is this a pot calling the kettle black". Is Nature that much better than PLOS? Nature is one of the most important sources for scientific information but..... Is Nature a peer reviewed Journal?

Most scientists think a peer reviewed journal as one where almost all articles are submitted to external peer review (1). The definition of peer reviewed journal by the International Committee

of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) is "one that has submitted most of its published articles for review by experts who are not part of the editorial staff." Thus a journal needs only 51% of their articles externally reviewed, to be peer reviewed. This low number would surprise almost all researchers. What about Nature? Approximately 80% of the articles submitted are rejected by a Nature junior editor. Therefore at least 80% are not peer reviewed according to the definition above. The fate of this article will likely be determined by a bright junior editor who has a Ph.D. in physics, and published in anesthesiology. We are epidemiologists. The person reviewing this article is neither external, nor our peer yet s/he determines the fate for over 80% of the submitted articles.

Is Nature a Scientific Journal? A scientific journal is defined as a periodical publication intended to further the progress of science, usually by reporting new research.  
[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scientific\\_journal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scientific_journal) We evaluated the rate of new peer reviewed data articles in Nature for the second issue of January for 1967 - 2007. In 1967 there were 79 data articles, 1977, 38, in 1987, 28, 1997, 27 and 2007, 12%. At the same time there was a rise on non-data/non-peer review articles, from 32-39%. In 1967 Data articles represented 70% of the articles. In contrast, in 2007 the percentage of data articles was only 27%. During the 40 year time period the percentage of data articles in Nature fell 83%. If we interpolate forward, based upon the data in the year 2018 data articles will be extinct in Nature.

A magazine is defined as a periodical containing a collection of articles, stories, pictures, or other features. [www.answers.com/topic/magazine](http://www.answers.com/topic/magazine). Is Nature a Scientific Journal or a Magazine?

We are not saying that these trends are bad, as Nature is indeed one of the most important conveyers of research knowledge. But we need to begin to think about what are the optimal approaches for sharing our scientific knowledge in the Internet age, clearly Nature is moving away from the researcher initiated data paper to having reporters and writers write the papers which have no new data. We argue that PLOS approach should not be criticized, rather we need to scientifically evaluate different approaches to Quality Control. Is Nature's approach better or worse than PLOS? No body knows.

We are left with the interesting question. Is Nature a peer reviewed journal? The answer is no. Is Nature a scientific Journal? The question is out.

1. LaPorte RE, Linkov F, Lovalekar M, Dodani S, Elkhoudari S, Shubnikov E Scientists are from Mars and Editors are from Venus *Angeologie* 2005 Vol 57:3

We submitted this to Nature, but have not heard back yet (what are the odds of this being accepted???). If rejected we plan to re-submit it to PLOS with of course the rejection letter from Nature Magazine.

Lecture of the week (Faina Linkov, Ph.D.)

In Supercourse, we love open access. We believe that public health can be improved globally with improved information sharing across the world. "Improving visibility of Indian Research" is a lecture which gives a beautiful example of open access publishing model in the Indian Schools. This lecture was given to the Supercourse by Dr. Rajashenkar and can be accessed at <http://www.pitt.edu/~super1/lecture/lec28821/index.htm>

The author argues that providing access to the Indian research data has a great potential to improve the visibility of Indian research. Supercourse is enjoying great participation in India with thousands of doctors, scientists, and teachers joining the network. For more information about Indian Heritage Network, contact Mita Lovalekar at [MitaL@pitt.edu](mailto:MitaL@pitt.edu)

Best Regards,

Ron, Faina, Mita, Puxatony Phil, Eugene, Ayesha, Francois, Rania, Jesse, Nicholas, Soni, Oscar  
the Grouch, Tortise and Hare

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