



Salami-Slicing Research

Unfortunately, in many places researchers are evaluated by the quantity rather than the quality of the research they produce. Sometimes people up for promotion desperately look for ways to increase the number of the publications in a given period. One such way is a simple practice: instead of publishing a substantial piece of work, of say 20 to 30 pages, authors slice the work into smaller pieces (like salami) and then submit a series of much less substantial papers of 5 to 10 pages each. When assessment systems take only the number of published or accepted papers into account, this allows (and encourages) authors to double or triple their output without producing anything new.

Needless to say, for *Ars Mathematica Contemporanea* we consider salami-slicing research unethical, and we strongly discourage authors to submit only small pieces of their research. We much prefer to publish pieces of work that are substantial and self-contained, whenever possible.

In the same vein, we would like to draw to the attention of readers a statement made in October 2017 by three national academies in Europe about good practice in the evaluation of researchers and research programmes. The Académie des Sciences (in France), the Nationale Akademie der Wissenschaften ('Leopoldina', in Germany) and the Royal Society of London (in the United Kingdom) have published some principles of good practice, and some warnings about flawed indicators such as the h -index and the use of such indicators as targets for performance. The statement finishes with the following summary, which we feel is important enough to quote:

“Evaluation requires peer review by acknowledged experts working to the highest ethical standards and focusing on intellectual merits and scientific achievements. Bibliometric data cannot be used as a proxy for expert assessment. Well-founded judgment is essential. Over-emphasis on such metrics may seriously damage scientific creativity and originality. Expert peer review should be treated as a valuable resource.”

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