

The recent article by Bhopal and others, "Editorial role in promoting valid use of concepts and terminology in race and ethnicity research", in *Science Editor* (2000;23:75-80), was well done. It will serve as a useful summary of the issues, as well as a timely call to action.

In that connection, it may be of interest to readers of *Science Editor* that, partly in response to the work of Dr Bhopal and others, the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) recently revised the portion of its Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals that deals with this issue. The relevant new wording is contained in the section on methods and reads as follows:

"The guiding principle should be clarity

about how and why a study was done in a particular way. . . . Authors should avoid terms such as 'race,' which lack precise biological meaning, and use alternative descriptors such as 'ethnicity' or 'ethnic group' instead. Authors should specify carefully what the descriptors mean, and tell exactly how the data were collected (for example, what terms were used in survey forms, whether the data were self-reported or assigned by others, etc.)."

It is the hope of the ICMJE that these recommendations will improve the way authors and editors handle this important problem.

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Editor

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