



CAUDEX

**ISN'T GHOSTWRITING A
THING OF THE PAST?**

**JACKIE MARCHINGTON
DIRECTOR OF GLOBAL OPERATIONS,
CAUDEX & GAPPER!**

DISCLOSURES

- The opinions expressed in this presentation are not necessarily those of my employer
- I am co-chair of the ISMPP Advocacy and Outreach Committee
- I am a member of the Global Alliance of Publication Professionals



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The Global Alliance of Publication Professionals

Providing a timely and credible response to influential stories about medical publication professionals

GAPP aims

- To provide a timely and credible response to influential stories about medical publication professionals (eg. professional medical writers, publication planners)
- To be a "go to" group for those needing timely input from international leaders of medical publication professionals.

GAPP team

Each member of GAPP has held leadership roles in not-for-profit associations from around the world that support the professional development and ethical practices of medical publication professionals.

Details about each member of the GAPP team can be found on the [About](#) page.

Should you wish to contact us, please use contact@gappteam.org or direct message us on Twitter [@gappteam](#)

We aim to respond to all enquiries within 1-2 business days



WHO ARE WE?



Julia Donnelly



Art Gertel



Cindy Hamilton



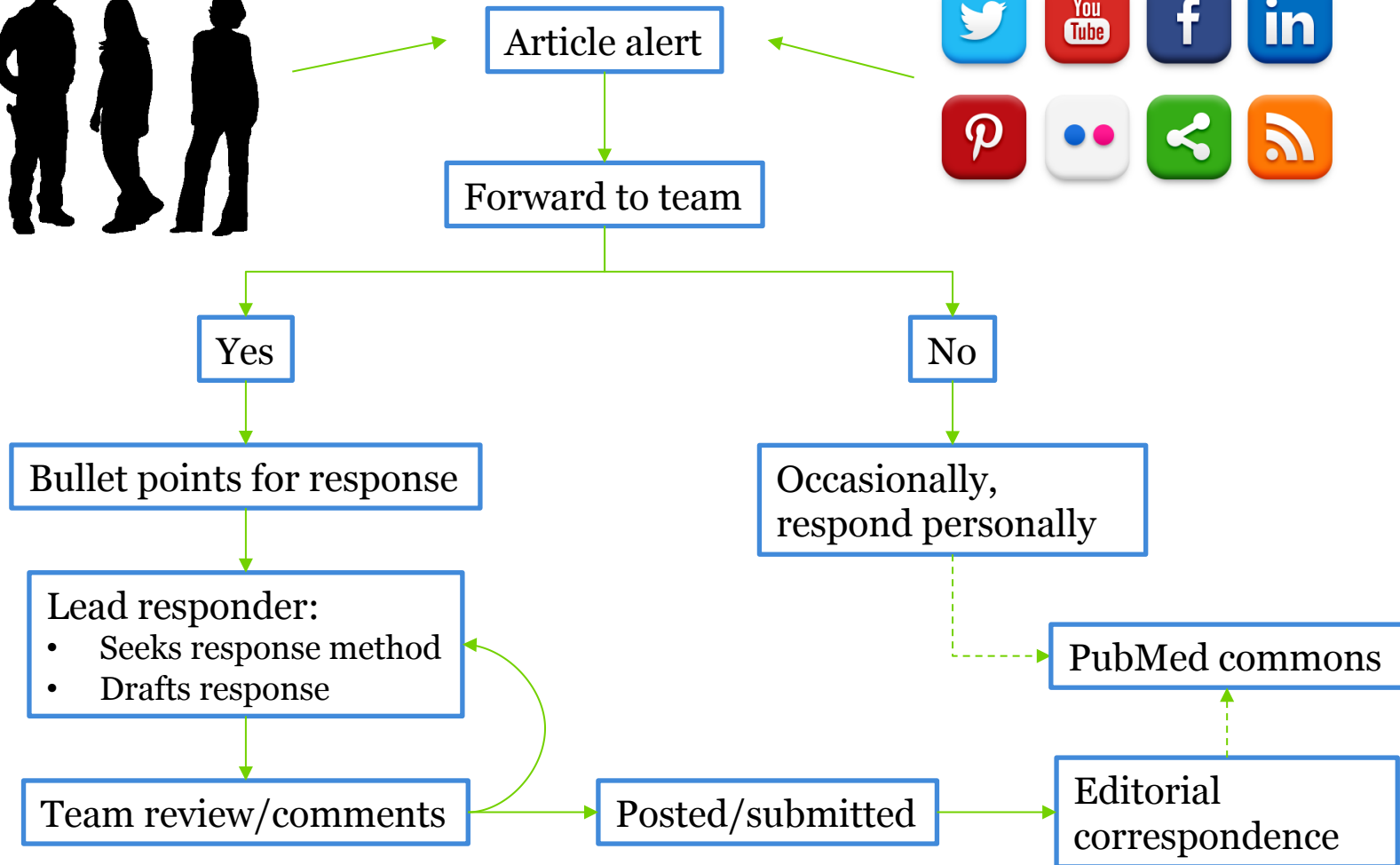
Jackie Marchington



Serina Stretton

- Leadership positions in established organizations
- Regional
- Small nimble team
- Dead men's shoes!

PROCESS



RESPOND OR NOT?

Probably

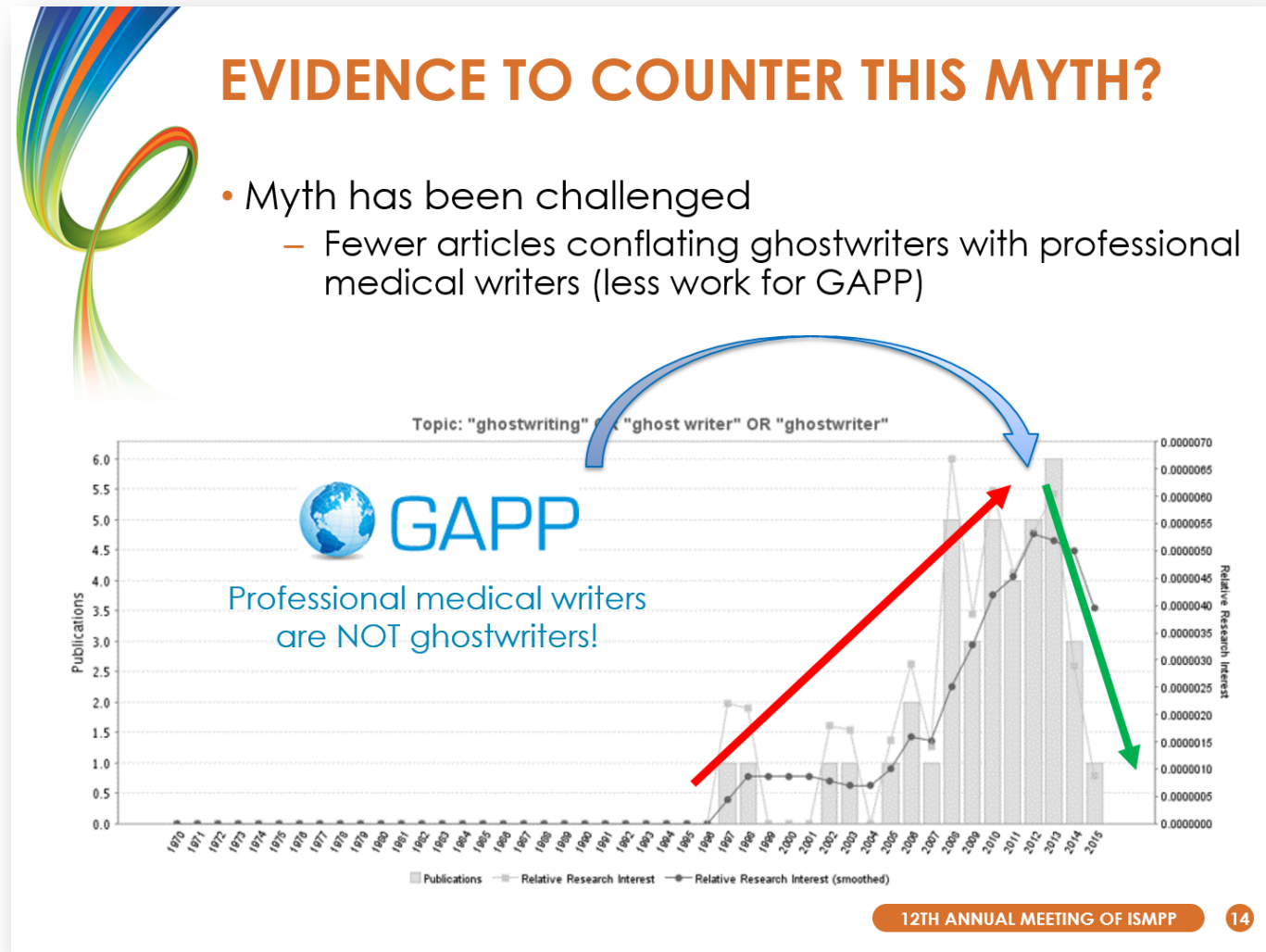
- High profile journal/wide reach
- Impressionable audience
- Publication practices
- Ghostwriting
- Anecdote vs evidence
- Dredging
- “Known” critics

Probably not

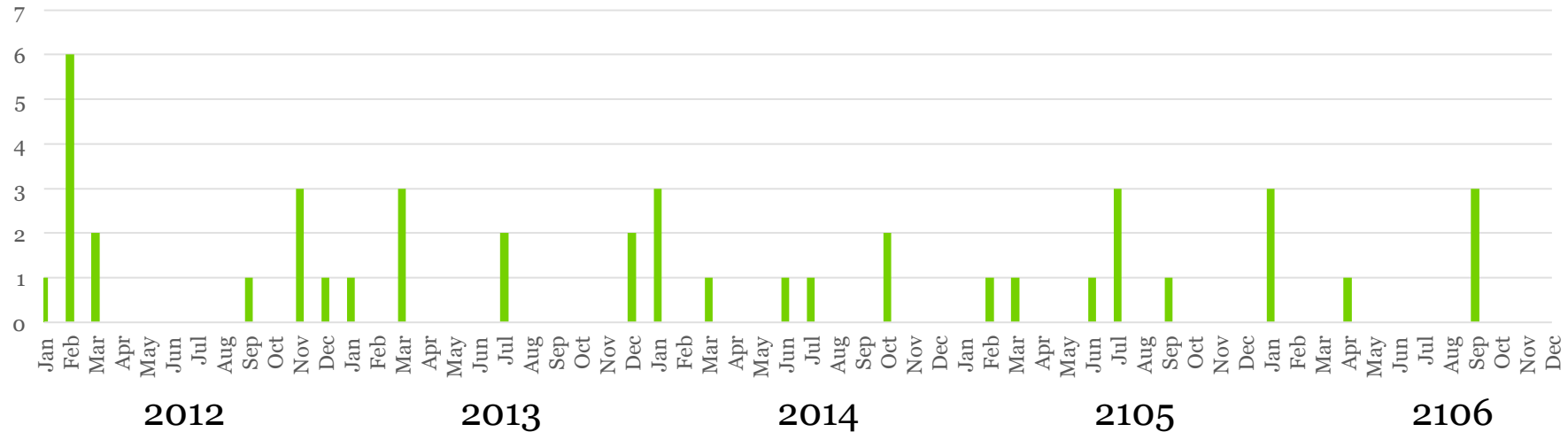
- Old news
- Low reach/paywalled
- Airtime
- Points we can't disagree with
- Not in our remit
 - General criticism of pharmaceutical industry practices
 - Data disclosure rates

LAST SPRING...

- Is the incidence of ghostwriting articles really falling?
- What's the future for GAPP?
- Have we won?



GAPP INTERVENTIONS: 2012–16



- 43 responses over 5 years
- Probably 20 more we have considered and not actioned
- Letters to the editor, online comments (articles and blogs), PubMed commons comments, correspondence to publishers/editors, tweets
- 1 invited article
- Publication plan? Not really, we are totally reactive...

COMMON THEMES

- Professional medical writers are ghostwriters
 - ICMJE, WAME, CSE
 - Journal guidelines
 - GPP3 and process
- Confusion of ghost authors, guest authors, ghostwriters
 - Definitions tailored to fit the crime
- Evidence-free statements
 - “Industry sponsored ghostwriting is common”
 - “Ghostwriters introduce spin”
 - “Professional writers have to please marketing departments”
- Occasionally, we thank authors/editors for being right!

MOST RECENT RESPONSES: 2016

- *Philadelphia Inquirer*: Criticism in a newspaper article of disclosure statement in peer reviewed article
- *Urologic Oncology*: Supportive editorial regarding industry sponsored research, but citing out of date literature
- *BMC Medical Ethics*: Matheson: criticizing the ICMJE criteria for legitimizing ghostwriting
- *British Medical Journal*: Matheson: initial response to BMJ article
- *European Journal of Cancer*: Misdefinition of ghost authorship to automatically include disclosed medical writing support
- *British Medical Journal*: Matheson: final joint statement

GHOSTS OF CHRISTMAS PAST...

THERE GOES THE RUG...

Peer-reviewed article

Ghostwriting prevalence among AMWA and EMWA members (2005 to 2014)

Cindy W. Hamilton¹ and Adam Jacobs²

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School of Pharmacy, Richmond, VA,
USA and Hamilton House Medical and
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Beach, VA, USA

² Premier Research, Wokingham, UK

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61.8% in 2005

41.7% in 2008

33.0% in 2011

34.4% in 2014



POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS

- It's true
- Responder selection bias
- Responses are anecdotal/historical, not personal or not current
- Respondents are mainly freelancers (...hold on, I will explain...)

AUDIENCE QUESTION

- When using freelance writers on publications, do you:
- Acknowledge freelancer by name, as normal
- Acknowledge supervising agency writer instead
- Acknowledge both freelancer and supervising agency writer
- Acknowledge neither

SO...

- It looks like ghostwriting is still happening in our industry, but we must continue to work towards eliminating it

SALAMI SLICING



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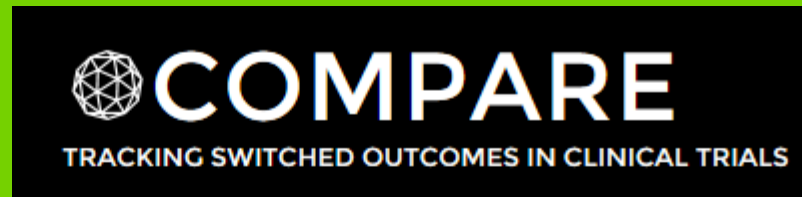
MMMMMM...

- Matheson A. The ICMJE Recommendations and pharmaceutical marketing - strengths, weaknesses and the unsolved problem of attribution in publication ethics. *BMC Med Ethics* 2016;17:20.
- Matheson A. Attribution , advocacy , disposable authors , corporate ghosts and cultural assimilation: new themes in the ethical critique of commercial medical literature. *The Write Stuff* 2016;25:25–30.
- Matheson A. The Disposable Author: How Pharmaceutical Marketing Is Embraced within Medicine's Scholarly Literature. *Hastings Cent Rep* 2016;46:31-7.
- Matheson A. Ghostwriting: the importance of definition and its place in contemporary drug marketing. *BMJ* 2016;354:i4578.

WHY DIDN'T WE RESPOND TO MATHESON'S THE WRITE STUFF ARTICLE?

- Distracted by ghostwriting survey
- Another article was describing practices not in line with GPP
 - Badly phrased or bad practice?
- We didn't notice it until later
 - Would've been nice to have a heads up...
- Hard to respond to accusations with an article in the same issue stating that 34% of EMWA/AMWA members were still participating in undisclosed roles

OUTCOME SWITCHING



DEFINITIONS

- **Ghostwriting:** Unacknowledged writers who make substantial contributions (falling short of authorship) are ghostwriters
- **Ghost authors:** Individuals who satisfy authorship criteria but are not credited
- **Honorary (or guest) authors:** Authors who do not satisfy authorship criteria but appear in the author byline
- Apples and pears, or not fruit at all!
- Vera-Badillo FE, Napoleone M, Krzyzanowska MK, Alibhai SMH, Chan A-W, Ocana A, et al. Bias in reporting of randomised clinical trials in oncology. *Eur J Cancer* 2016;61:29–35.

THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE,
YOU JUST HAVE TO KNOW WHERE TO LOOK...



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DAMNED IF YOU DO

■ BMJ blog: Richard Lehman's journal review

<http://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2015/06/08/richard-lehmans-journal-review-8-june-2015>

Just how much of this paper was written by the named authors is unclear. "Professional medical writers who were paid by Bristol-Myers Squibb contributed to the preparation of the manuscript and are not listed as authors."

Article

We thank the study protocol manager, Katherine Nunnick, for her support and Alyson Bexfield and Joanne Tang of Caudex for their assistance in the preparation of the manuscript.

Manuscript

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DAMNED IF YOU DO

■ MedPage Today, August 2015

■ <http://www.medpagetoday.com/PublicHealthPolicy/HealthPolicy/53057>

PUBL

A
P

A quick look at the paper reveals that three of the five authors are Amarin employees and that a commercial company was paid by Amarin for editorial assistance. The other two authors, including well-known KOL Christie Ballantyne, received funding from Amarin. The ProPublica Dollars For Docs database shows that in 2013 the first author, — Harold Bays, received \$4,823 and Ballantyne received \$8,155 from Amarin.

COMMENTS ▾

In addition, the acknowledgements section at the end of the paper includes the following statement:

Editorial assistance was provided by Peloton Advantage, LLC, Parsippany, NJ, and funded by Amarin Pharma Inc. Dr Harold Bays (Principal Investigator) wrote the first draft of this report, with subsequent drafts revised and edited by the other authors, who vouch for the accuracy and completeness of the data and approved the final version for submission.

This means, in case you're not familiar with the way these things work, that the paper was almost certainly the product of an elaborate publication plan funded by Amarin. Regarding the role of Peloton Advantage, let me put it this way: it is highly unlikely their role was restricted to proofreading and copyediting.

DAMNED IF YOU DO

Re: Clinical use of [REDACTED]

I am pleased to submit the above paper for consideration for publication in [REDACTED]. This article provides a clinical overview of treating [REDACTED] in the UK, includes a clinical data summary for [REDACTED], and discusses my practical experience. I have also included case studies to illustrate different approaches with different patients.

I can confirm that this paper has not been published previously and is not under consideration for publication in another journal. I agree to transfer copyright to [REDACTED] for all publication purposes in whatever form and for permanent or temporary retention in an archive retrieval system.

Medical writing assistance was provided by [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] (Caudex Medical Ltd), funded by [REDACTED]. Assistance was provided from the outset of the manuscript, with my full consent and in compliance with Good Publication Practice 2 (BMJ 2009;339 b4330 doi: 10.1136/b4330). This writing assistance is disclosed in the acknowledgments section of the manuscript.

I hope that you find this paper of interest and look forward to hearing from you.

**Not Ben
Goldacre**

—Original Message—

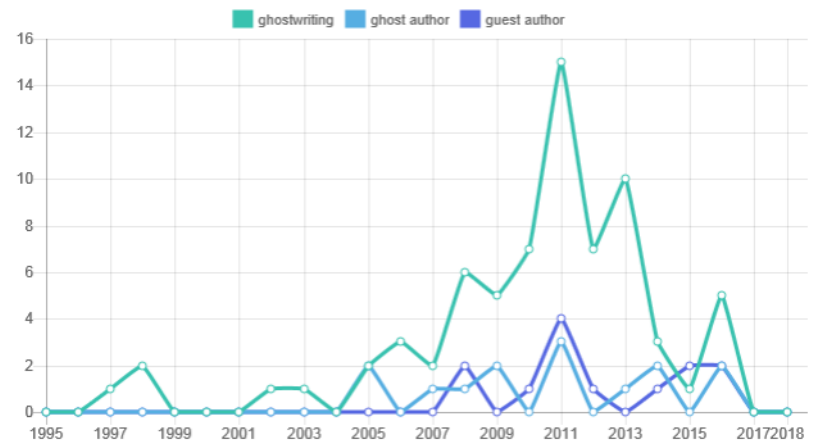
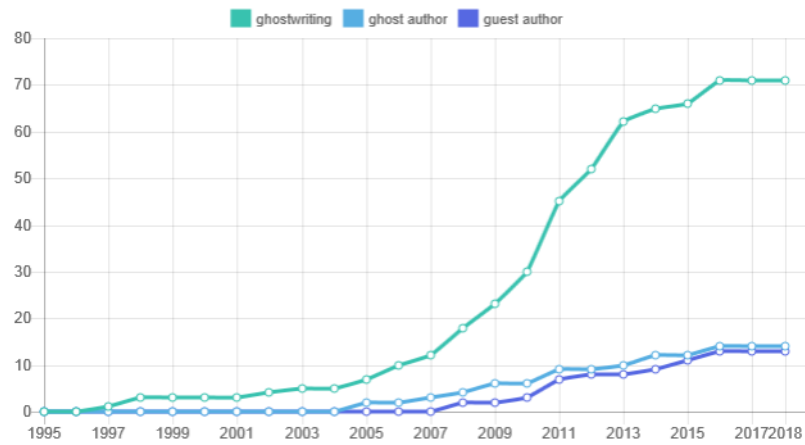
From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tue, 28 Sep 2010 21:24
Subject: [REDACTED] paper

Hi- I am sorry but we only consider original papers written by the researchers.
BG

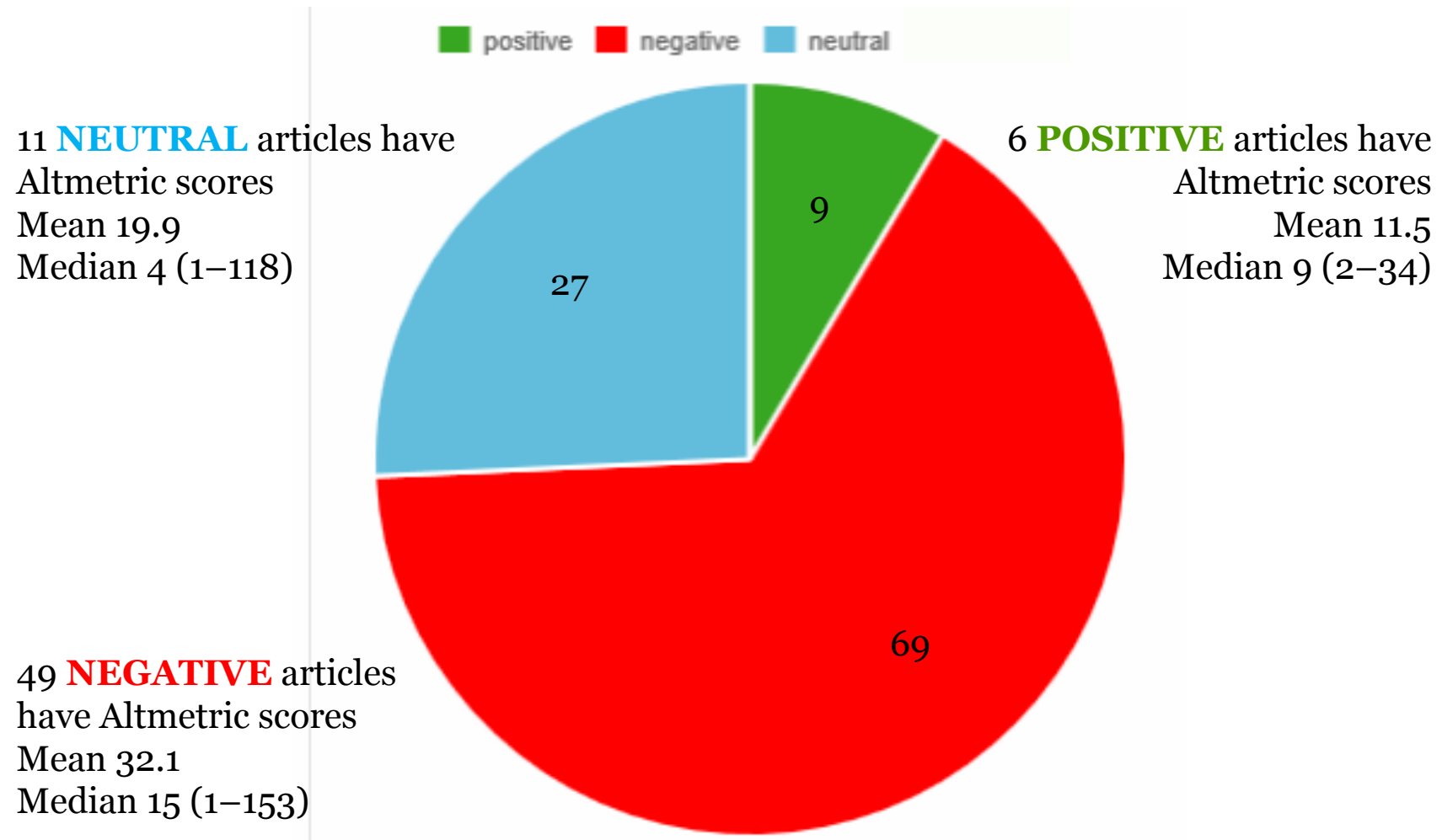
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LIES, DAMNED LIES AND STATISTICS

REVISITING SOME STATISTICS



ARTICLE REACH: BAD NEWS TRAVELS FURTHEST



THANK YOU!

ANY QUESTIONS?

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CADEX

A MCCANN HEALTH COMPANY