

Homepage Ludo Waltman •

# Review of "Recommendations from the RISRS Report: Reducing the Inadvertent Spread of Retracted Science"

**Ludo Waltman**

**Published on:** Sep 18, 2021

**License:** [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC-BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

This paper presents a set of recommendations for reducing the spread of retracted research. This is important and valuable work. I enjoyed reading this paper. My comments are fairly minor.

One of the starting points for the work presented in this paper is the idea that continued citation and use of retracted research is a problem. Rather than simply stating that this is a problem, I would like to ask the authors to explain why this is a problem. A (short) review of the literature on continued citation and use of retracted research would be very helpful as background information. For instance, it seems to me that some citations to retracted research are much more problematic than others. If an article builds directly on flawed results reported in a retracted article, this is highly problematic. In contrast, if an article gives a superficial citation to a retracted article without substantively engaging with the research in that article, the problem seems much less severe to me. I wonder how much we know about the magnitude of the problem of continued citation and use of retracted research. An overview of the relevant literature would be very helpful.

Regarding the second recommendation ("Recommend a Taxonomy of Retraction Categories / Classifications and Corresponding Retraction Metadata that can be Adopted by All Stakeholders"), I wonder whether, in addition to retractions, the proposed taxonomy should also cover other mechanisms for indicating (potential) problems with published scholarly works, in particular corrections and expressions of concern. I also would like to ask the authors to elaborate on their idea that "publishers, standards organizations ... to track amendments (39)" (l. 241-243). This idea, which I consider to be very sensible, appears to offer an alternative to the current approach of retracting research that is considered unreliable and flawed. The authors seem to support this idea. I wonder whether this means the authors believe that the current approach of retracting unreliable or flawed research needs to be reconsidered, in line with the suggestion made in the title of Ref. (39): "Amending published articles: time to rethink retractions and corrections?". I would find it helpful if the authors could be more clear on their position on this issue.

l. 117-118: This sentence is unclear.

l. 149: The results section starts in a rather abrupt way. In the first sentence of this section, it is not clear what 'these recommendations' refers to. The recommendations need a proper introduction.

1. 637: The reference to Woods (2021) seems to be missing in the reference list.