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Editorial Views and Policies

To the Editor:

We thank Drs. Kharasch and Houle¹ for commenting on an article² and an editorial³ published in *Anaesthesia* in their Editorial Views. It would be more usual for questions to be posed to the authors of a journal article by means of correspondence to the primary journal, and we are sure that Drs. Carlisle, Loadman, and McCulloch would be delighted to respond

to any such letters. We would therefore refer the readers of *ANESTHESIOLOGY* to such correspondence in *Anaesthesia* for further discussion of these articles and the issues arising.

In response to the specific suggestions made about the editorial policy of *Anaesthesia*, the Journal stands by its decision (and is supported in doing so by the Editorial Board) to screen all submitted randomized controlled trials for data distribution.⁴ However, we would like to point out that no article has ever been, or will ever be, rejected based on this screening alone⁵; a finding that a submission appears to have an unusual distribution of data is always followed by a request to the authors for original trial data,⁶ and it is the analysis of these data, along with the authors' responses to further questioning, that leads to any decision to accept or reject. Many submissions initially flagged using this screening method are found to have done so through authors' errors rather than intentional deception or worse.

Anaesthesia and its Editorial Board also stand by the suggestion that extreme distributions of baseline data merit further investigation, the expectation being that many, if not most, will turn out to be due to errors. The scientific record must be reliable, and *Anaesthesia* is happy to take the lead in checking past, as well as current/future, publications.

Competing Interests

Dr. Klein is current Editor-in-Chief of *Anaesthesia*. Dr. Yentis is the Immediate Past Editor-in-Chief of *Anaesthesia*. Dr. Clyburn is Chair of the Editorial Board of *Anaesthesia* and President of the Association of Anaesthetists of Great Britain and Ireland (London, United Kingdom).

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