I am a semi-retired Professor of Psychiatry and Associate Dean who has spent a considerable portion of my new-found time pondering the problem of research misconduct. I am prompted to write after reviewing a transcript of your Committee’s Dec. 4 meeting and the UKRIO Post Notes (Jan) which call for, Additional research to more accurately assess research integrity and research culture in the UK and elsewhere.

In the USA considerable time and energy have been expended addressing the research misconduct problem. For example, in the past 25 years, the U.S. National Academy of Sciences has published three lengthy Reports on the subject. (1992,2002, 2017). They have all, inexplicably, also concluded with calls for, further research.

Further research ? Web of Science reports that during the period, 2000-2017, there were 4,114 publications on Research misconduct and 3,763 on Scientific Misconduct, What remains to research? Indeed, the nature of research misconduct and the contributing factors are obvious.

The community of research scientists around the world share common characteristics.. They are comprised of bright, well educated, ambitious individuals pursuing common career goals thus producing: the anxious trainee, the biased investigator and the sociopathic scientist. Relatively obvious targeted remedies are thus available: A true mentor for the anxious trainee; effective protection for the whistleblower and meaningful penalties for senior investigators .(1,2)

Why then have they not been implemented ? Why the persistent calls for further studies? This suggests, to this psychoanalytically trained psychiatrist, that there exists a resistance within the scientific community for any intervention by what are perceived to be external constituencies. This should not come as a surprise. There was a similar response 35 years ago when the US Congress, in response to well publicized instances of research misconduct, resisted such intervention. Addressing this resistance will prove to be the first task.

Research misconduct poses a threat to scientific truth; the scientific community itself and the welfare of the public. This calls for remedial action not more studies of the obvious.

I hope that you will find these observations to be helpful. I have attached copies of two published papers which address these issues in more detail.

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1, Kornfeld,DS, Academic Medicine, 2012.87(7),887-882