

Description

BMC Research Notes is a journal that publishes academic research, however, what sets this BioMed Central journal apart from other publishers is the fact that this journal focuses on data that would not traditionally be accepted by a journal. This includes short updates to previously published work, changes to established methods, short articles, and null results, to name a few. [BMC Research Notes](#) operates on the philosophy that these types of data are scientifically valid and should be widely disseminated to the scientific community. All articles published in this journal are open access and are permanently accessible online without any charge and with no embargo period.

Bringing Dark Data to Light

BMC Research Notes was established in 2008 with the intention of being a repository for so-called “dark data” or research results that would ordinarily remain hidden in a lab book and never be published. Over time, the journal began publishing full-length research manuscripts as well. An awareness of the need for dark data and negative results has led to the creation of other academic journals dedicated to dark data, such as the [Journal of Negative Results in BioMedicine](#). *BMC Research Notes* has recently decided to [renew its focus on dark data](#) and as part of this initiative, they have reduced the number of article types that they will publish and most are expected to be Research Notes. Research Notes will be short articles that report unconventional or brief research outputs. These Research Notes will be concise, lack a lengthy introduction, and focus on the scientific findings. The journal will expand its scope to publish across all scientific and clinical disciplines.

Dark data serves many purposes in the scientific community. The results of replicating a published study to test the stated methodology is not usually submitted to a journal and is one category of dark data. Replicating a methodology and confirming or debunking results is useful data. Publishing this information could save other researchers time (if the methodology was somehow flawed) or validate the original publication. Negative or null data is also important as it allows scientists to see what has already been attempted and failed, thereby preventing colleagues at different institutions from repeating experiments that are doomed to fail.

The return of *BMC Research Notes* to its core mission as a home for null results, brief updates to previously published work and other forms of dark data represents a service to the scientific community. While these results are not groundbreaking, they are data that the larger scientific community needs in order to learn from their peers and not repeat the same mistakes. Making dark data freely available benefits the community and more such outlets are needed to continue to bring this dark data to light.

Category

1. Publishing Research
2. Understanding Ethics

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Author

daveishan