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## Leading scientific journals 'are censoring debate on global warming'

By Robert Matthews  
(Filed: 01/05/2005)

Two of the world's leading scientific journals have come under fire from researchers for refusing to publish papers which challenge fashionable wisdom over global warming.

A British authority on natural catastrophes who disputed whether climatologists really agree that the Earth is getting warmer because of human activity, says his work was rejected by the American publication, Science, on the flimsiest of grounds.



Radcliffe on Sour power station with Dr Benny Peiser (inset). He disagrees with the pro-global warming line

A separate team of climate scientists, which was regularly used by Science and the journal Nature to review papers on the progress of global warming, said it was dropped after attempting to publish its own research which raised doubts over the issue.

The controversy follows the publication by Science in December of a paper which claimed to have demonstrated complete agreement among climate experts, not only that global warming is a genuine phenomenon, but also that mankind is to blame.

The author of the research, Dr Naomi Oreskes, of the University of California, analysed almost 1,000 papers on the subject published since the early 1990s, and concluded that 75 per cent of them either explicitly or implicitly backed the consensus view, while none directly dissented from it.

Dr Oreskes's study is now routinely cited by those demanding action on climate change, including the Royal Society and Prof Sir David King, the Government's chief

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scientific adviser.

However, her unequivocal conclusions immediately raised suspicions among other academics, who knew of many papers that dissented from the pro-global warming line.

They included Dr Benny Peiser, a senior lecturer in the science faculty at Liverpool John Moores University, who decided to conduct his own analysis of the same set of 1,000 documents - and concluded that only one third backed the consensus view, while only one per cent did so explicitly.

Dr Peiser submitted his findings to Science in January, and was asked to edit his paper for publication - but has now been told that his results have been rejected on the grounds that the points he made had been "widely dispersed on the internet".

Dr Peiser insists that he has kept his findings strictly confidential. "It is simply not true that they have appeared elsewhere already," he said.

A spokesman for Science said Dr Peiser's research had been rejected "for a variety of reasons", adding: "The information in the letter was not perceived to be novel."

Dr Peiser rejected this: "As the results from my analysis refuted the original claims, I believe Science has a duty to publish them."

Dr Peiser is not the only academic to have had work turned down which criticises the findings of Dr Oreskes's study. Prof Dennis Bray, of the GKSS National Research Centre in Geesthacht, Germany, submitted results from an international study showing that fewer than one in 10 climate scientists believed that climate change is principally caused by human activity.

As with Dr Peiser's study, Science refused to publish his rebuttal. Prof Bray told The Telegraph: "They said it didn't fit with what they were intending to publish."

Prof Roy Spencer, at the University of Alabama, a leading authority on satellite measurements of global temperatures, told The Telegraph: "It's pretty clear that the editorial board of Science is more interested in promoting papers that are pro-global warming. It's the news value that is most important."

He said that after his own team produced research casting doubt on man-made global warming, they were no longer sent papers by Nature and Science for review - despite being acknowledged as world leaders in the field.

As a result, says Prof Spencer, flawed research is finding its way into the leading journals, while attempts to get rebuttals published fail. "Other scientists have had the same experience", he said. "The journals have a small set of reviewers who are pro-global warming."

Concern about bias within climate research has spread to

the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, whose findings are widely cited by those calling for drastic action on global warming.

In January, Dr Chris Landsea, an expert on hurricanes with the United States National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, resigned from the IPCC, claiming that it was "motivated by pre-conceived agendas" and was "scientifically unsound".

A spokesman for Science denied any bias against sceptics of man-made global warming. "You will find in our letters that there is a wide range of opinion," she said. "We certainly seek to cover dissenting views."

Dr Philip Campbell, the editor-in-chief of Nature, said that the journal was always happy to publish papers that go against perceived wisdom, as long as they are of acceptable scientific quality.

"The idea that we would conspire to suppress science that undermines the idea of anthropogenic climate change is both false and utterly naive about what makes journals thrive," he said.

Dr Peiser said the stifling of dissent and preoccupation with doomsday scenarios is bringing climate research into disrepute. "There is a fear that any doubt will be used by politicians to avoid action," he said. "But if political considerations dictate what gets published, it's all over for science."

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