

Fraud and scientific research

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Sir, – I was intrigued by Prof William Reville’s recent [column](#) on fraud in science (“Something has gone very wrong with science”, June 18th). The article contained many quotations and statements such as “much of the scientific literature, perhaps half, may simply be untrue”; “the apparent endemicity of bad research behaviour is alarming”; “today we must face up to the fact that . . . something has gone fundamentally wrong with science”.

However, a close reading of the piece revealed that all of the statements refer to a particular area of science, bio-medicine. I cannot comment on this field, but I wondered whether one can assume that the issue is equally significant across all branches of science.

Is the problem of fraud in science endemic or rare? Is the peer-review process less reliable in some areas of science than in others? What can be done to address the problem?

As it happens, such questions constitute the main theme of this year’s Robert Boyle Summer School, a festival of science that takes place from June 25th to June 28th in Boyle’s ancestral home in Lismore, Co Waterford. All are welcome, including of course, Prof Reville! – Yours, etc,

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