

## **Comment on ‘Quantifying the consensus on anthropogenic global warming in the scientific literature’**

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### **Abstract**

Cook's highly influential consensus study omits tests for systematic differences between raters. 411 abstracts are unaccounted for. The paper does not discuss the procedures used to ensure independence between the raters, and those to ensure that later ratings were not influenced by earlier results. Clarifying these issues would further strengthen the paper.

Cook et al. (2013) has attracted a remarkable amount of attention. Reusswig (2013) praises the paper but Legates, Soon, Briggs, and Monckton of Brenchley (2013) and Tol (2014a) question its data and methodology (Bedford & Cook, 2013; Cook et al., 2014a; Tol, 2014b). Dean (2015) notes that the paper omits inter-rater reliability tests. Cook and Cowtan (2015) add these.

Cook et al. (2013) also omit tests for systematic differences between raters. Abstract rater IDs may or may not be confidential (Queensland, 2012, 2014), but the authors could have reported the results without revealing identities.

The paper argues that the raters were independent. Yet, the raters were drawn from the same group. Cook et al. (2013) are unfortunately silent on the procedures that were put in place to prevent communication between raters.

Cook et al. (2013) state that 12,465 abstracts were downloaded from the Web of Science, yet their supporting data show that there were 12,876 abstracts. The paper is silent on the missing 411 abstracts.

The date stamps, which may or may not have been collected (Cook, 2013; Cook et al., 2014b), reveal that the abstracts were originally rated in two disjoint periods (mid-February to mid-April; second half of May). There was a third period of data collection, in which neutral abstracts were reclassified. Unfortunately, Cook et al. (2013) do not make clear what steps were taken to ensure that those who rated abstracts in the second and third periods did not have access to the results of the first and second periods.

It would be of considerable benefit to readers if these four issues would be clarified, if at all possible.

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