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Memorandum

To: Trialists

Fr: Curtis Meinert

Re: I'm mad as hell

If Howard Beale (played by Peter Finch) had been a trialist and giving his "I'm mad as hell" speech today, as he did in *Network* (1976 film), it might have been as below.

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I don't have to tell you things are bad. Everybody knows things are bad. Shrinking research budgets. Constantly scrambling for funding. Spending more time getting funding than it takes to do a trial. Living in constant fear of walking the bread line.

Forced to produce timetables you know cannot be met, just for a chance to enter the pearly gates of funding. Forced to name that tune in five notes, four notes by using a surrogate outcome to "save" time.

The meta-analysts and systematic reviewers tell us that we lack "transparency". The big data people tell us we don't need trials anymore. Pundits tell us we are not collecting the right data. Journals don't want to publish and then bitch about publication bias. Critics tell us that our analyses are biased.

Things are bad.

We have to register our trials before we start enrollment. If we are one day late editors will not publish because of concern about publication bias, not realizing that they are the biggest contributors to the publication bias problem.

Things are bad. Things are crazy and getting crazier.

I am responsible for the trials I do, but proscribed from seeing results until the trial is finished by data monitoring committees controlled by funding agencies and then I am supposed to heel to post haste and write up results I have never seen for fear of bias.

Meanwhile I am forced to spend hours fitting square pegs into round holes posting "tabular results" to satisfy the FDA or risk a \$10,000 fine per day for every day I am late.

All I want is to have time to analyze my data before I have to give them up to others.

Just leave me alone.

Well! I'm not gonna leave you alone. I want you to get mad! I don't want you to protest. I don't want you to riot –I don't want you to write to your congressman because I wouldn't know what to tell

you to write. All I know is that first you've got to get mad. You've got to say, "I'm a trialist, God damn it! I am not a data robot. I have rights too!"

So I want you to get up now. I want all of you to get up and away from your computers. I want you to get up right now and go to the window. Open it, stick your head out, and yell, "I'M AS MAD AS HELL, AND I'M NOT GOING TO TAKE THIS ANYMORE!"

Things have got to change. But first, you've got to get mad! You've got to say, 'I'm as mad as hell, and I'm not going to take this any more!' Then we'll figure out what to do about everybody who knows better how to do trials than you. But first, get up off your dead ass, open the window, stick your head out, and yell and say it: "I'M AS MAD AS HELL, AND I'M NOT GOING TO TAKE THIS ANYMORE!"