

Guest Editorial

Plagiarism: Accidental or Deliberate?

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In recent years, numerous journals have evolved and the race of publication is on. It is a dream for a researcher to get their work published in a good peer reviewed indexed journal having a high Impact Factor. In this race of publication, few researchers overlook or ignore the term 'scientific misconduct' or 'research misconduct'. United States Public Health Service (USPHS) defines research misconduct as "Fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism, in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results."¹

The Committee of Publication Ethics (COPE), defines misconduct as "Behavior by a researcher, intentional or not, that falls short of good ethical and scientific standard".² It includes: (a) Fabrication is making up data or results and recording or reporting them; (b) Falsification is manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record; (c) Plagiarism is the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit".¹

The word 'plagiarism' is derived from the Latin word "*plagiare*" which means to 'kidnap', and is one of several forms of research misconducts. The World Association of Medical Editors (WAME) defines plagiarism as '*... the use of others' published and unpublished ideas or words (or other intellectual property) without attribution or permission, and presenting them as new and original rather than derived from an existing source*', and a person who commits plagiarism is known as plagiarist.³

Plagiarism, based on the intention can either be accidental (unintentional) or deliberate (intentional). Accidental plagiarism is usually seen among students and junior researchers

and is mainly due to lack of awareness of the limits of taking data, lack of skills for appropriately acknowledging data sources and citing others' work. Deliberate plagiarism usually takes the form of intentionally copying others' work and presenting it as one's own research or idea.⁴

There are number of factors which usually leads to plagiarism i.e. immature writing skills, enormous pressure on researchers to publish their research 'the publish or perish' rule, getting grants, publishing it first among researcher, peer competition, more number of publication under their belt, requirement for promotion, etc.

COPE has published many guidelines for authors and editors. Plagiarism can occur in many types, including plagiarism of ideas, text, designs, collusion, self-plagiarism, patch-writing and many others. Plagiarism, whether accidental or deliberate both falls under scientific misconduct, carry legal or financial penalties and can ruin a researchers reputation.⁵

Plagiarism can easily be avoided by acquiring knowledge about ethical medical writing, acknowledging the original source of the idea/text/illustration, time management and reconfirming the data as many times as possible. Sometimes, plagiarism can easily be detect simply by doing Google Search or by using advanced Plagiarism Detection Software's i.e. SafeAssign™, WCopyFind™, CrossCheck™, eTBLAST, Turnitin plagiarism detection software, Thenticate® etc.

I would like to quote "*Don't perish, practice ethical writing and then publish....*"

References

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