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Editorial

Plagiarism and Ethics for Medical and Scientific Researchers

Plagiarism of ideas: It is the most difficult type of plagiarism to identify because the author may not directly copy words from the original source, but employs the same ideas, thoughts, or conclusions without acknowledgement.

Self-plagiarism: occurs when an author cites their own previously published original scientific research without appropriate acknowledgement and permissions from the publisher. This misconduct most commonly occurs in anatomy where one cannot change the feature or image of either animal or human anatomy or physiology, author has to take the permission from the previously published original publisher. It is the most debatable of all the forms of plagiarism.

Duplicate publication: Here an author simultaneously submits the same data to different journals without clear indication to the respective editorial committees. The CONSolidated Standards of Reporting Trials (CONSORT) checklist assists in reducing the incidence of duplicate publication [4-6].

- i. Some educational points regarding publication Sometimes, authors submit the same article to two or more different journals, in case both the journals have published, the article that was published later has to be retracted. National Library of Medicine (NLM) reserves the right to assign both the articles the Publication Type of Duplicate Publication.
- ii. If an article originally published in non-English language, he needs to follow the Uniform Requirements issued by the ICMJE (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors) for translation.
- iii. Biomedical journals commonly use the Vancouver style for references.
- iv. Ethics in publication should be followed, especially regarding the definitions of what is a substantial contribution for a scientific product in order to warrant authorship.
- v. Standard operating procedure (SOP) is designed to identify and prevent plagiarism in all publication activities based on the existing medical and editorial review practices used by academic and clinical research centers, scientific and medical journals, and professional publication societies.
- vi. All the journals nowadays uphold a combined originality score of greater than 90% by final editorial review before a manuscript is accepted.

Editorial

It is the responsibility of educators at medical institutions and departments to teach their students about writing ethics and best practices. The principle of good medical writing or scientific writing is a clear, brief, exact, and it should be honest presentation of the scientific ideas.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious form of scientific misconduct that results from “the failure to attribute words, ideas, or findings to their true authors” Specifically, the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME) defines plagiarism as “the use of others’ published and unpublished ideas or words without attribution or permission, and presenting them as new and original rather than derived from an existing source” [1,2].

In an editorial, Satyanarayana says, “plagiarism begins very early in science” [3]. It perhaps starts with the student’s seminar presentations done early during their professional studies. Most of the dissertations submitted by medical students are copied from previously published material. A Croatian study [4] showed that over 90% of medical students in their second year plagiarized to some extent when asked to write essays on given topics.

There are many varieties of plagiarism, the most common types which aids for new researchers to publish the work done in different fields are described below.

Mosaic plagiarism: The most common form of plagiarism and occurs when the structure and language of the sentence or paragraph is similar to that of the original source, few words and phrases from the original source document are utilized; however, the originality is maintained.

Plagiarism of text: Text or word-for-word plagiarism is also called as Direct Plagiarism, it is the most transparent offense, where exact sentences, phrases, or sections are used and presented as original thought without acknowledgement.

Ethical considerations

It is a well-recognized principle in medical ethics that the



consent of a participant should be obtained before performing any experimental related procedure, whether invasive or non-invasive, for the purpose of research, publication of cases or for treatment. The Nuremberg Code makes it clear that voluntary consent of the human subject is absolutely essential for research [7].

Declaration of Helsinki (DoH) [8] principle B-15 emphasizes that a research study should be submitted for consideration, comment, guidance, and approval of an ethics committee.

DoH 2008 principle B-30 [8] mentions that the author is responsible for the completeness and accuracy of reports of their research. It also mentions that studies which have not been conducted in accordance with DoH should not be accepted for publication. The six main sources of relevant international guidelines on conducting, reporting, and editing research are [8-10].

- i. Council of International Organizations for Medical Sciences (CIOMS)
- ii. World Medical Association (WMA)
- iii. Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials (CONSORT)
- iv. International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE)
- v. World Association of Medical Editors (WAME)
- vi. Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

Journal editors can verify whether articles submitted and published in their journals follow these instructions for ethical approval and written informed consent or not. Also the ICMJE expects authors to indicate whether the procedures followed were in accordance with the ethical standards laid out by the responsible committee on human experimentation and with the DoH [8].

A lack of omission and a lack of proper training for scientists have made the progression of plagiarism and research misconduct in India. India does not have a statutory body to deal with scientific misconduct in academics. Nowadays Plagiarism and Ethics has become a hot topic for discussion in education and in the research field, so to maintain the genuineness of our own work independent ethical committee should be established.

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