

Ethical Issues in Research

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ABSTRACT

There are many ways in which misconduct in research can be defined and the presence of thousands of journals worldwide and ease of access of these articles across the globe has not led to any common name to define this problem. Research ethics are the set of ethics that govern how scientific and other research is performed at research institutions such as universities, and how it is disseminated. There are many reasons for plagiarism starting from individual and not limiting to institutions, journals, textbooks, research funding agencies or international trials. Previously the only method to detect plagiarism was the ability/experience of the editor or reviewer to detect copies from the original. New and more sophisticated computer methods that analyze lexical, syntactic, and semantic features, tracking of paraphrasing, citation based detection, analyzing the graphics, cross language text borrowing by non-English speakers and copying of references will aid to detect plagiarism. Retraction of the article, blacklisting of the author with or without institution and expulsion from the institute, criminal charges, apology letter are some of the penalties for plagiarism.

Key words: Citing, COPE, Ethics, Plagiarism

Introduction

There are many ways in which misconduct in research can be defined and the presence of thousands of journals worldwide and ease of access of these articles across the globe has not led to any common name to define this problem. Plagiarism is one of the ways to define misconduct in research. Plagiarism can occur at any stage of the research lifecycle from proposing to communicating and reporting research. It is best understood in the context of communicating research, however, plagiarism can also be observed in other research activities such as authorship and peer review.

Plagiarism is presenting and using another's published or unpublished work, including theories, concepts, data, source material, methodologies or findings, including graphs and images, as one's own, without appropriate referencing and without permission when permission is required. It includes literal copying, failure in paraphrasing or attribution, and the misuse of privileged information obtained through confidential review of research proposals and manuscripts.

Ethical Research

Research ethics are the set of ethics that govern how scientific and other research is performed at research institutions such as universities, and how it is disseminated. Ethical codes cover the following areas:

● Honesty and Integrity

This means that we need to report our research honestly, and that this applies to our methods (what we did), our data, our results, and whether we have previously published any of it. We should not make up any data, including extrapolating unreasonably from some of our results, or do anything which could be construed as trying to mislead anyone. It is better to undersell than over-exaggerate our findings.

When working with others, we should always keep to any agreements, and act sincerely.

● Objectivity

We should aim to avoid bias in any aspect of our research, including design, data analysis, interpretation, and peer review. For example, we should never recommend as a peer reviewer someone we know, or who we have worked with, and we should try to ensure that no groups are inadvertently excluded from our research. This also means that we need to disclose any personal or financial interests that may affect our research.

● Carefulness

Take care in carrying out our research to avoid careless mistakes. We should also review our work carefully and critically to ensure that our results are credible. It is also important to keep full records of our

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research. If we are asked to act as a peer reviewer, we should take the time to do the job effectively and fully.

● **Openness**

We should always be prepared to share our data and results, along with any new tools that we have developed, when we publish our findings, as this helps to further knowledge and advance science. We should also be open to criticism and new ideas.

● **Respect for Intellectual Property**

We should never plagiarise, or copy, other people's work and try to pass it off as our own. We should always ask for permission before using other people's tools or methods, unpublished data or results. **Not doing so is plagiarism.** Obviously, we need to respect copyrights and patents, together with other forms of intellectual property, and always acknowledge contributions to our research. If in doubt, acknowledge, to avoid any risk of plagiarism.

● **Confidentiality**

We should respect anything that has been provided in confidence. We should also follow guidelines on protection of sensitive information such as patient records.

● **Responsible Publication**

We should publish to advance to state of research and knowledge, and not just to advance our career. This means, in essence, that we should not publish anything that is not new, or that duplicates someone else's work.

● **Legality**

We should always be aware of laws and regulations that govern our work, and be sure that we conform to them.

● **Human Subjects Protection**

If our research involves people, we should make sure that we reduce any possible harm to the minimum, and maximise the benefits both to participants and other people.

Plagiarism Elaborated:

Plagiarism ("plagiarist") derives from the Latin word "Plagiarius" which means a kidnapper and it was first described in literature by the dramatist Ben Jonson in 1601 to describe someone guilty of literary theft. The first article on this topic was written by Halsted G.B appeared in "Science" in 1896 under the title "complement or plagiarism" and since then hundreds of articles have been written in this topic.

Plagiarism is defined as the practice of directly copying and then presenting an existing production without accurate citing or referencing, and/or passing off the product as one's own, without permission from the

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original producer. Plagiarism is the most frequent offence under the Academic Code of Conduct, as a result of a lack of proper acknowledgement. By understanding the plagiarism meaning and being able to identify the plagiarism definition, you can be confident that you will avoid the consequences.

Merriam Webster dictionary defines plagiarism as (a) The theft and use of other people's ideas or words as ours; b) Use of sources without attribution; c) Literary theft and d) presenting some ideas as own and as it is new, while this idea already exists in other source.

The first attempt to address plagiarism was in 1992 in the USA by the Office of Research Integrity (ORI) and then later in 1997 in the UK by Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) both of which gave guidelines for research, scientific integrity and a set of principles to detect and prevent plagiarism. The commonly used definitions by some of the leading bodies worldwide are given below. COPE describes misconduct as the “intention to cause others to regard as true that which is not true. The Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh: definition was “Behaviour by a researcher, intentional or not, that falls short of good ethical and scientific standard”. ORI: defines research misconduct using the FFP model, that include:

Fabrication – Making up data or results and recording or reporting them.

Falsification – 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.

Person's- ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit. Research misconduct does not include honest error or differences of opinion

Ethics are broadly the set of rules, written and unwritten, that govern our expectations of our own and others' behaviour. Effectively, they set out how we expect others to behave, and why. While there is broad agreement on some ethical values (for example, that murder is bad), there is also wide variation on how exactly these values should be interpreted in practice.

Types of plagiarism

Intentional or Unintentional

Intentional plagiarism occurs when the author deliberately, intentionally or knowingly copies entire text, paragraph or data and presents as its own. Unintentional occurs when the author either is not aware of such research, is unaware of the ethics in writing or does not know how to cite and thus presents similar articles.

Text/words or Ideas/data

The commonest form of plagiarism is of text known as “copy-cut-paste”

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or “word-to-word” writing wherein complete sentences, paragraph, tables or even pictures are reproduced without acknowledgement. Described as “...copying a portion of text from another source without giving credit to its author and without enclosing the borrowed text in quotation marks.”Although previous research need to be discussed complete copying of text is to be avoided. With use of computers and the internet this form of plagiarism is very prevalent. Copying of ideas is a common form of plagiarism wherein someone else's ideas, presentations, audio or video files, thoughts, inferences or suggestions are made into research and presented as own without proper acknowledgement. This is of course very difficult to detect or prove. Some other methods are taking ideas from books, previously published thesis, journals, magazines, conferences or meetings

Mosaic writing

This happens when a new author uses the previous article text by replacing, reordering or rephrasing the words or sentences to give it new look without Acknowledging the original author. The American Medical Association Manual of Style describes mosaic plagiarism as“... borrowing the ideas and opinions from an original source and a few verbatim words or phrases without crediting the original author. In this case, the plagiarist intertwines his or her own ideas and opinions with those of the original author, creating a confused, plagiarized.

CLONE–Submitting someone else's work, which is just transcribed, as his/hers own;

CTRL-C–Contains most of the text from a single source, without alterations;

RE-TWEET–Includes proper citation, but with too much text used from the original.

ERROR 404–Includes quoting non-existent or inaccurate source;

AGGREGATOR–Include proper citation of sources, but contains almost nothing of their own work;

FIND-REPLACE–Changing key words and phrases, but retaining a substantial part of the content of the primary sources;

EMIX–Paraphrasing multiple sources which are so arranged that complement each other

RECYCLE–The use of their own work (if the article is already published somewhere and not cited);

HYBRID–Combine perfectly cited sources with the copied without citation;

MASH UP–Blending the copied material which is taken from multiple sources;

Self Plagiarism

This happens when the author has added research on a previously published article, book, contributed chapter, journal, and presents it as a new without acknowledging the first article or taking permission from the previous publisher. Submission of the same article to multiple journals to increase the chances of publication or making multiple articles from a single article, known as, salami slicing is another form of plagiarism.

Avoiding Plagiarism in writing articles

Plagiarism is widespread even in developed countries and can be avoided by being honest while writing articles. Some of the ways to do this is by being original, taking time to write articles, writing in your own words, acknowledging all the studied articles, proper reference and strict adherence to the author or journal guidelines. Avoid copy paste type of writing and always write in the cover letter to Editor of any similarities with other article in literature.

Conclusion

Researchers must follow research ethics properly. Plagiarism is a common but avoidable malpractice prevalent in the world. It affects all from students to senior teachers and from developing to developed countries. Strict adherence to the journal guidelines and being honest can help to reduce this burden on the scientific society. Use of the common computer aided tools to detect plagiarism followed by severe punishment to the guilty, blacklisting the authors, worldwide notice of their activity, are some ways to address this problem.

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