



Unethical Publication Practices

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Introduction

Unethical Publication Practice is a global problem (1). Journals at large are facing a huge problem of unethical practices in the publication. JK Science strongly discourages such practices and aims to bring this serious issue in notice.

Compulsions to indulge in such unethical practices

Desire to see voluminous curriculum vitae, to increase number of publications for promotions and academic advancement, overinflated bibliography is also utilized for grant sanctioning, competition among the colleagues, to prove professional supremacy and in many universities, publications are the criteria to become guide /internal or external-examiners

Unethical Publication practices

Authorship: An Ethical Dilemma (2)

Gift Authorship : Inclusions, among the authors, of an individual who does not fulfill the requirement for authorship. It is common practice to oblige some seniors or colleagues.

Pressured Authorship : A person when use his position of authority in order to be included as an author, regardless of not being thus qualified is referred as Pressured authorship.

Ghost Authorship : It is referred to denial of authorship of individuals who played an effective part in the work and were qualified for authorship.

Apparently gift and pressured authorship do not appear a big problem but can provide an opportunity to a non-meritorious person to get ahead by virtue of an over-inflated bibliography.

Authorship credit should be based on substantial contributions to conception and design, or acquisition of

data, or analysis and interpretation of data; drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content; and final approval of the version to be published. All persons designated as authors should qualify for authorship, and all those who qualify should be listed. Each author should have participated sufficiently in the work. All contributors who do not meet the criteria for authorship should be listed in an acknowledgment section (3).

Duplicate Submission (4) : Is defined as publication of a paper that overlaps substantially with one already published. Most biomedical journals will not consider manuscripts that are simultaneously being considered by other journals and same is the stand of JK Science. For practical purposes, any article that has similar or near similar hypothesis, sample characteristics, methodology, results and conclusions to a published article is a duplicate article, and if it is republished without the knowledge of the editors, it is called duplicate publication. The authors of the duplicate manuscript may be the same, as in most cases, but it may also be a different author(s) publishing the same article without the knowledge of the initial author(s).

Duplicate publication can lead to waste of finite resources as journals have limited number of pages and resources and eat away the time and effort of reviewers. Duplication of articles doubles the efforts of indexing authorities. It can overload medical information thereby increasing the time to search for relevant information. Moreover, it is a serious violation of copyright laws and is unethical. Institutional and Departmental Heads and Local Ethics committees should have a supervisory role over

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the publications from the institutes to overcome this wide prevalent problem.

Salami Publication (4) : On the other hand, slicing of data from a single research process or gathered during a single study period, into different pieces, creating individual manuscripts from each piece, and publishing these to different journals or even the same journal is called 'salami publication' or 'salami slicing'. In case of salami publications, readers have to read more than one article to get full information and a clear idea. Hence JK Science strongly discourages such publications. Here it is very difficult to find out salami publication as clever authors ensure to hide the dates of research work if they intend to send salami publication to the journal. Only self regulations and strict vigilance from the Heads of the Departments/Institutes can help to overcome this problem. Many a time new authors ignorantly indulge into it, in that case this article will be of great help to create awareness.

Plagiarism (5-7) : Is the use of another's ideas words and work in part or in whole without attributing it to the original source? It is not only unethical but it is a copyright violation. Those interested in knowing detail legal implication of plagiarism can log on www.plagiarism.org. This problem is also widely prevalent but many a times reasons may be ignorance on the part of new authors who are not made aware of this by their seniors. The awareness and strict peer reviewing can help to overcome this problem.

Publications adding no new information to medical knowledge base : Many a time articles are submitted to journals which add no new information to medical knowledge base. This problem starts with the choice of the research topic and also reflects the problem in research methodology being adopted in medical institutions (8). We believe that it is unethical to spend resources on research if that research does not add any thing new to knowledge base.

Thus, it is very important to answer these research questions before starting any research. What is already known about this topic?. What is new (i.e. not already reported) in your work? (methodology/results/conclusions).What does your work add to the existing body of knowledge?

Scientific Fraud (9, 10) : This is not a new problem in the history of Medicine. Many examples are there when studies have been retracted after becoming evident that they are fraud and cooked. *Fabrication* (altering truthful information) and *Falsification* (Inventing information where none previously existed) are the common types of scientific frauds. Published account suggest that paper containing recognizable fraudulent material is very low probably less than 0.02% (10).

Self regulation, scientific audits and asking for the detail record of research data from the authors can help to certain extent to overcome this problem. Moreover, Institutional, Departmental Heads and Local Ethics Committees should have a supervisory role over the publications from the institutes. The institutes and/or Departments should keep a record of publications from their researchers and academicians along with the preliminary data supporting the research findings.

JK Science, Journal of Medical Education and Research aims to create awareness about few unethical publication practices and appeal that they should be discouraged by one and all.

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