

## Scientific writing and plagiarism

Dear Editor,

We read with great interest the editorial entitled "Innovation or plagiarism; think twice before you write."<sup>[1]</sup> Academic misconduct and publication frauds have emerged today as an unfathomable and complicated problem and affected genuine research and researchers in many subtle ways. It is welcome news to see awareness generated regarding "Plagiarism" and "fictitious research" while addressing the "cause" as institutional pressure on academics to publish. This pressure to publish more and more leads to dilutions of research and lowers the standards of research. Duplicate publications are the fruits of time honored "publish or perish" mentality.<sup>[2]</sup> Quantified data shows that publication frequency has massively increased over the past decade in the Indian subcontinent particularly Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.<sup>[3]</sup> This pressure on the academician is a result of a chain reaction. The private and public sector universities are ranked by higher education commission and categorized on the basis of research output of the institute consolidated as faculty research in the Ph.D. program departments with standardized criterion.<sup>[4]</sup> The faculty on the tail end of the pressure shaft shifts toward publications in substandard predatory journals phishing for articles.<sup>[5]</sup> This is the starting point of a series of survey-based substandard studies, duplication of experimental results, salami slicing during write up, and swinging of co authorships.<sup>[6]</sup> Aside from the "deliberate culprits" involved in research scams, there are many young researchers who are naïve to the sensitivity of the matter, as they just get swept from their feet and plunge into the mainstream in strife to rise in their careers. When told, they had already dirtied their hands in the process before knowing any better. Awareness regarding publications frauds and plagiarism is required. Courses on manuscript writing and publication ethics should be included in postgraduate programs. An unshakeable concept should be generated and instilled into the minds of the researchers that it is easier, more credible, and convenient to publish if the research methodology and conduct is pristine and genuine.<sup>[7]</sup> Starting from

the research supervisor, the research institutes, the researcher himself and ultimately the journal editors, all have a vital role to play in order to curb the pandemic. There should be skill development trainings and workshops on plagiarism, quality of research, and writing manuscripts for good journals. The perils of misconduct should be highlighted as well. The educational institutes should generate a system for fool proof scrutiny of academic profiles of the faculty and their updated list of publications on regular basis, so that this delinquency could be restrained. Promotions and incentives should be linked with quality and not quantity of publications.

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