Editorial

Innovation or Plagiarism; Think twice before you write

It has always been the will of researchers to seek the answers for the unaddressed issues. However, the dissemination of such knowledge has few underlying issues to its propagation. Recent research scandals of Hwang Woo-Suk's (fake stem-cell lines)[1] and Jan Hendrik Schön's (duplicated graphs)[2] raise concerns over the reliability of research. It reflects effortless possibilities for a researcher to publish fictitious information in the leading journals. Beside the fact, that such unethical initiative not only results in loss of finance but also imposes a direct risk to human health.

This is perhaps one side of picture where authors can be blamed. However, on other hand it is never discussed that what makes an author to do copy and paste. In recent years it is seen that academic institutions pressurizes the faculty to publish research articles that are considered as an essential element in key performance indicators. Furthermore, if colleagues are publishing in a journal with good impact it will further pressurize an individual to generate respectable output. In this race sometimes one forget the concept of novelty or originality and go for copy and paste. This question is a very vital matter to be discussed.[3,4] Fabrication and falsification are serious forms of scientific misconduct that are categorized as plagiarism. This scenario generate a question that how frequent scientific frauds occur and how many of these are identified. Evidence suggests that such known misconducts are merely "tip of the iceberg". By publishing in an impact factor journal a researcher is not only gaining priceless honor but also contributing to improve the ranking of his/her institution.[5,6] Many reputable publishers and journals are doing their best to prevent such scientific mishaps. Mostly they prefer that author should disclose that they have not submitted his manuscript to another journal or are not currently in consideration for publication in any form. However, again the responsibility goes back to authors to feel the gravity of this issue that Plagiarism and multiple publications of same data is unacceptable by international standards.[7] In a particular scenario, duplication may be useful to provide convenient access to the scientific community. It may also seem helpful to report important updates on surveys, clinical trials or even international guidelines. However, publications that replicate previous work with indistinguishable results and conclusions often lack innovation to justify additional publication.[8] Such frauds need to be picked up and dealt accordingly.

Identification of duplicate data in a publication is not an easy task by any means. Certain software's are available that assist in picking up such scientific frauds to some extent. Moreover, readers should be encouraged to report such malpractice to the editors so that the respective articles could be removed. The authors should be asked to give an explanation and if they fail to do so, their names should be reported to their respective institutions so that necessary actions could be taken. Every attempt should be made to minimize plagiarism. Nevertheless, authors should understand that in a long run, plagiarism will only threaten their integrity in scientific community.

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