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Chair, GMC Fitness to Practice Panels

Cases discussed 1998-2011

• Duplication/redundancy	109
• Authorship issues	61
• No ethics approval	46
• Falsification/fabrication	41
• Plagiarism	43
• No or inadequate consent	39
• Unethical research or clinical malpractice	34
• Undeclared conflict of interest	22
• Reviewer misconduct	19
• Editor misconduct	13
• Data ownership	5
• Other	49

Publication Ethics

- Honesty and integrity are essential if the public is to be protected and science validated
- Researchers, editors, publishers and sponsors are all responsible

Why does it happen when journals exist to enhance the academic database?

- and... enhance seniority and income
- and... increase publishers' profits
- and (in biomedicine) ... enhance pharmaceutical company profits

How frequent is research misconduct?

- **1.97% of scientists admitted falsification/fabrication**
- **33.7% admitted other 'questionable research practices (qrp)'**
- **14% report fabrication/falsification by colleagues**
- **72% report observing 'qrp' by colleagues**

How many scientists fabricate & falsify research? A systematic review & meta-analysis of survey data. Fanelli D PLoS ONE 2009;4:e5738

How honest are researchers?

- 107/194 NHS consultants had observed research misconduct
- 11 admitted personal misconduct
- 35 said they might do it in future
- Geggie J Med Ethics 2002;28:207

Student plagiarism

- 16% of 363 respondents admitted plagiarising
- No previous advice: 24%
- Detection rate: 3%

Duplicates and plagiarisers

62,213 Medline citations

- 0.04% with no shared authors highly similar = plagiarism
- 1.35% with shared authors highly similar = duplication
- So there may be 3500 plagiarised and 117,500 duplicate papers
- Déjà vu—A study of duplicate citations in Medline
Mounir Errami et al *Bioinformatics* 2008;24:243-9

Plagiarism

- ‘To copy ideas and passages of text from someone else’s work and use them as if they were one’s own.’
- Unreferenced use of the ideas of others submitted as a ‘new’ paper by a different author.

- Ojuawo A. Milla PJ. Lindley KJ. **Non infective colitis in infancy: evidence in favour of minor immunodeficiency in its pathogenesis.**

East African Medical Journal. 74(4):233-6, 1997

Held at BMA Library, No longer received

UI: 9299824

- Ojuawo A. St Louis D. Lindley KJ. Milla PJ. **Non-infective colitis in infancy: evidence in favour of minor immunodeficiency in its pathogenesis.**

Archives of Disease in Childhood. 76(4):345-8, 1997.

Held at BMA Library, Currently received

UI: 9166029

- Dr S Dutta-Roy erased by the GMC in November 2007
- Plagiarised the work of colleagues
- Invented a co-author (Dr Kupp), whom he blamed for the plagiarism

Plagiarism

- A paper is published written by a junior researcher from China
- An author complains that quotations have been taken from his book chapter without citation
- The author apologises, states his English is uncertain and the author expressed precisely what he, himself had wanted to say

Plagiarism

- Author A publishes review in journal X
- Group B publishes review in journal Y
- Group A claim of 2 of 33 paragraphs copied without attribution
- Editor of journal Y seeks explanation
- Group B claim 'innocent error'
- Editor Y prefers no action; editor X prefers retraction of paper in journal Y

Plagiarism

- Editor's reasons for 'no action'
- Only about 6% of the review duplicated
- Group B came to many different conclusions from that of author A
- Review paper duplication does not affect systematic reviews

Plagiarism

- Epidemiological study of 30,000 patients
- Similar study published elsewhere
- Latter authors would not have resources
- Many authors geographically distant
- Medline search reveals a pattern

- Regulatory body unhelpful

Types of plagiarism

- Intellectual theft
- Intellectual sloth (“cut and paste”)
- Language constraints
- Technical (missing “...”)
- Self-plagiarism (journalists’ “recycling”)

Shafer SL. Anesth Analgesia 2011;112:491-3

Avoiding plagiarism

- Can it be accidental?
- Always reference the work of others
- Put the words of others in quotation marks
- Seek permission to copy tables, figures etc.
- *This slide by permission of Elizabeth Wager*

What do journals do?

cross
check 



Sample Report



etBlast



- Obscure journals
- On-line CPD
- PhD dissertations
- Other on-line sources

ANESTHESIA & ANALGESIA®

The Gold Standard in Anesthesiology

- Authors urged to self-screen
- Supervisors urged to insist

“No longer can a prominent investigator deny accountability for plagiarism because a junior co-author copied text without his or her knowledge”

Impact of plagiarism

- 'Originals': journal IF 0.147 – 52.59 (3.87)
- 'Duplicates' IF 0.272 – 6.25 (1.6)
- Original:duplicate citations = 28:2
- In 10 pairs, duplicate cited more often than original

Long et al Science 2009;323: 1293-4

Plagiarists respond

- 60/163 identified authors of papers containing plagiarism
- 28% denied wrongdoing
- 35% confessed (and mostly apologetic)
- 22% were co-authors who denied writing the manuscript
- 17% claimed they did not know they were cited as authors

Long et al Science 2009;323:1293-4

How is fraud detected?

- Colleagues (usually junior)
- Other whistleblowers
- Reviewers
- Readers
- Regulatory bodies
- Editors (plagiarism software/photoshop)
- Statisticians
- Sponsors
- Publishers

Why do researchers not detect fraud?

- Junior researchers fearful for their job
- Overwhelmed by charisma
- Bullying and threats
- Not trusting their own suspicion
- Lack of support from institution
- Turning a blind eye

Why editors detect few cases

- Normally trust authors
- Paper not within specialty knowledge
- Initial paper triage is cursory
- Lack of statistical expertise
- Effect of conflict of interest
- Hunger for high impact papers
- Cannot afford image screening or plagiarism detection software

What do editors watch for?

- Authors unlikely to have sufficient resources
- Data 'too good to be true'
- Findings hard to believe
- Paper submitted by back door
- Author puts undue pressure on editor
- Reviewer reports concern

Academic responses

- Not all institutions have robust systems
- UK universities and research councils have rejected a mandatory supervisory body to investigate and regulate research practices
- UKRIO procedures published 2009 are advisory only

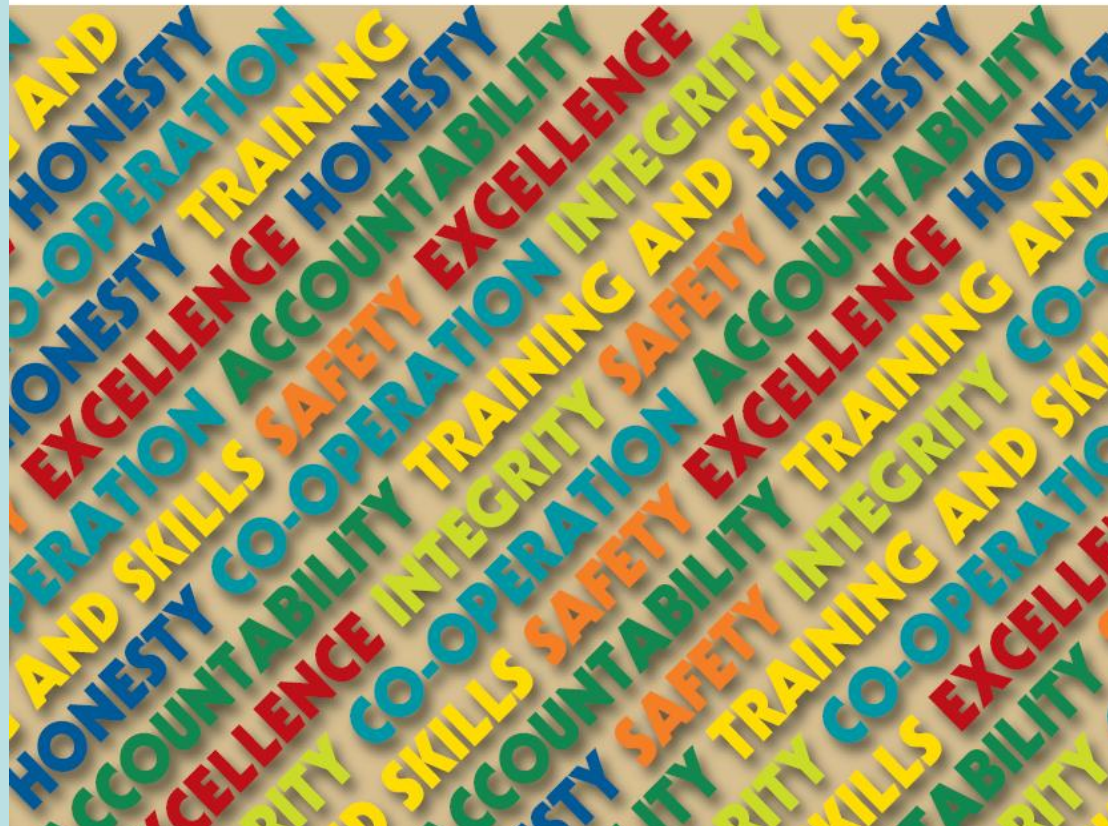
Academic responses

- A Croatian government report finds a senior researcher guilty of serial plagiarism and duplication: the Univ. of Zagreb tells it to get lost.
- Paper retracted for plagiarism by Stem Cell Dev J: University of Newcastle says: 'submitted in error' and blames junior author.
- A senior academic is currently under GMC investigation for alleged 'cover-up' of research misconduct

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR RESEARCH

Promoting good practice
and preventing misconduct

September 2009



Guidelines & Codes of Conduct

- World Association of Medical Editors
www.wame.org
- International Committee of Medical Journal Editors www.icmje.org
- Committee on Publication Ethics
www.publicationethics.org
- Council of Science Editors
www.councilscienceeditors.org

Further resources

- Plagiarism and the Law. Saunders J 2007

<http://www.bllaw.co.uk/pdf/Plagiarism%20and%20the%20law.pdf>

- Best practice guidelines on publication ethics: a publishers perspective. Graf et al

Int J Clin Pract 2007;61 (Suppl. 152) 1-26

- JISC: advice for universities on student plagiarism

<http://www.jisc.ac.uk>

Scientific Misconduct Blog

<http://scientific-misconduct.blogspot.com>

- About all manner of corporate pharmaceutical scientific misconduct and related curious incidents. If you're not outraged, you're not paying attention.



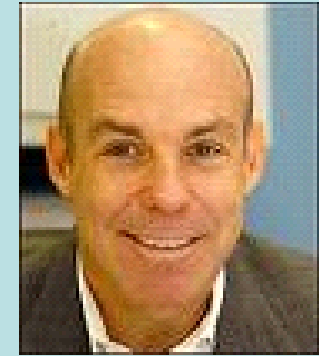
Rogues Gallery



**Hendrik Schön, USA
(1 paper every 8 days in 2001)**



**Hwang Woo-Suk,
South Korea, 2005**



**Eric T Poehlman,
Canada, 2005
(& prison 2007)**



**Hans Werner Gottinger
?100 plagiarised papers**



**Prof Scott Reuben US: 10
years fake research. Six
months jail**



**Andrew Wakefield UK
Erased 2010**

Man of the Match Award



Hans Werner Gottinger 100+