

# Editor's Role on Plagiarism

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*“Everyone has the Right to the Protection of the Moral and Material Interests Resulting from any Scientific, Literary or Artistic Production of which he is the Author.”*

*-United Nations, Universal Declaration of Human Rights.*

The term known as ‘Plagiarism’ was first coined in English around the year 1601 by the dramatist Ben Jonson, in order to characterize someone committing theft in literary.<sup>1</sup>

Plagiarism (From the Latin ‘plagiare’, ‘to kidnap’) is defined as ‘The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and thoughts of another author and representation of them as one’s original work’.<sup>2</sup>

In Medical sciences, research is the systematic investigations into and careful study of materials and sources in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions to increase the present stock of knowledge.<sup>3</sup>

Plagiarism is a serious breach of research ethics that, if committed intentionally, is considered research misconduct. Plagiarism in its most serious form is the passing off of all, or large sections, of another author’s published paper as one’s original work. If, following appropriate confidential investigation, such a plagiarism is established, this will result in heavy sanctions including retraction of the article, up to a 5 year publication ban from Board of Editor’s and informing of employers and/or professional bodies. This may result in loss of research funding, loss of professional stature, and even termination of employment of the plagiarizing author(s). Plagiarism undermines the authenticity of research manuscripts and the journals in which they are published and compromises the integrity of the scientific process and the public regard for science. Plagiarism violates the literary rights of the individuals who are plagiarized, and the property rights of copyright holders. Violation of these rights may result in legal action against the individual(s) committing plagiarism. Although plagiarism has been present since the beginning of science, it seems to be increasing because the internet facilitates finding and copying the work of others. Editor should aware of some astonishing plagiarisms in some other publications that fortunately are rare but which encourage us to be increasingly vigilant.<sup>4</sup>

It is possible to plagiarize not only the work of others, but also one’s own work through re-use of identical or nearly identical portions of manuscripts without acknowledgement and without citation. Simultaneous or subsequent submission of similar manuscripts with only minor differences and without citation between the manuscripts is, unfortunately, a not uncommon practice by authors hoping to acquire multiple publications from a research project. Editor should strongly discourages this practice and will act against it if the facts become known before publication. In

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extreme cases of self-plagiarism (Duplicate publication of a full paper which has already been published elsewhere in a peer-review journal) sanction similar to those outlined above may be applied.

When the possibility of plagiarism exists the editor will act quickly. Editor should examine the original material and the publication alleged to constitute plagiarism. If the editor conclude that no plagiarism has occurred, the accuser will be notified and no further action is necessary. If the evidence suggests that plagiarism may have occurred, then editor will contact the accused authors the authors whose work may have been plagiarized and the copyright holder of the original material. The correspondence will include the alleged plagiarizing language and a copy of the original and suspected work. If all parties agree that plagiarism has occurred, a written letter of apology should be sent promptly by the offending author(s) to the Editor/Publisher and to the authors and copyright holder whose work has been plagiarized. If the offending work has been published, a notice of plagiarism, citing both the plagiarized and the offending articles, will be published in the next issue.<sup>5</sup>

If the accused authors deny that plagiarism has occurred, the editor must explore the accusation further. The investigation will also involve the Board of Editors. The investigation should be concluded as quickly as possible.

If the investigation of the allegation of plagiarism concludes in support of the allegation, then the process for the case where plagiarism is admitted shall be instituted.

An allegation of plagiarism is a very serious accusation, and should never be made lightly. On the other hand, self-policing is a major strength of the scientific community, and plagiarism should always be reported when it is suspected to have occurred.

Scientific research is publication and published work must be accurate, honest, unbiased and evidence based. In case of team work, is important to have mutual trust and respect along with integrity.

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