

Ethics in Publishing: An Opinion on its Importance

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ABSTRACT

A research effort actually comes in to effect when it is published and becomes available to the scientific community; however, publishing it after following the required ethics is an equal challenge. Since last few years, a number of agencies specifically medical organizations and publishing editors have released several guidelines to resolve the issues regarding the conflicts related to publications and resolve the issues. In this communication we provide the required guidelines about publication ethics in a simple form so that they can be easily followed. This article may contribute towards spreading the awareness in the researchers regarding publication ethics may diminish the research misconduct.

INTRODUCTION

Assumption, interpretation and experimentation are the basic pillars of science. In the past, thousands of scientists worked in several fields without any social boundaries (Maqbool et al. 2014). Every person should have the authority to utilize scientific innovations for

a favorable life style. A shared understanding between the government policies, scientists and industries is required for research upgrading. Innovative ideas should be largely shared among the scientific community to benefit the entire mankind. Publication is the best way for sharing ideas, innovations and views to the scientific world. It is last and most crucial phase of

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a successful research project. It is the outcome of long term efforts on careful preparations and experimental analysis (Derntl 2014). As most of the research projects are directly or indirectly supported through public investment, it should be developed for the benefits of entire society. A detailed description of the performed procedures should be universally accessible and easily acceptable. As a particular objective is responsible for raising so many scientific aims consequently affecting the entire world, publications should be comprehensive, truthful, correct, and fair and should not give deceptive information (Titus *et al.* 2008; Shaw and Erren 2015; Resnik and Shamoo 2017).

ROOTS OF A RESEARCH PUBLICATION

Consistency in Methodology

The researchers should follow all the ethical and legislative guidelines while accomplishing the research. Standard methodology should be employed for data investigation. Information provided in the publications should be liability of all the authors (Wager and Kleinert 2010). Researchers should systematically control and organize the research specifically for conclusions, statistical facts and data presentations (Wager and Kleinert 2013; Awais 2015).

Truthfulness in Data

Honesty is the best policy not only in life style but also in research. Data should not be fabricated or manipulated (Martinson *et al.* 2005). Related pictures should be presented in original form without any ambiguous modification (White 2007). All the efforts should be made to explain the methodology and results in a way so that it can be followed by other researchers. All the information including contradictory and strange outcomes against the expected results should be presented in their original form. It is responsibility of all the authors to convey with editor on finding any gaffe in submitted or published articles. All authors should help in corrections of manuscript whenever it is asked by editor or reviewers (Wager and Kleinert 2010; Wager and Kleinert 2013; Awais 2015).

All the previous relevant works should be included and cited accordingly. However, only those citations should be included that is related to the work and can guide the future researchers to get a complete scenario of the scientific problem (Ball 2002; Poulton 2007; Kamat and Schatz 2014; Damineni *et al.* 2015).

Innovativeness

The work submitted to any journal should be innovative and not submitted at two platforms at a time. If co-sub-

mitted or co-published, it should be brought in to notice of editors and reader (Uzun 2013). Several publications developed from the same project should be differentially presented with different information and benefits for the researchers. Copyright laws should be considered before publishing or reproducing any data. Statistical or other informative data included from previous publications should be precisely acknowledged. Authors should adhere to publisher guidelines and send the manuscript to one journal at a time. All the queries and publishing issues of editors' and reviewers' should be handled effectively (COPE 2009; Wager *et al.* 2009; Wager and Kleinert 2013; Awais 2015). Actual outcomes should be reflected in the entire work and should not include any unconfirmed results.

Precision or Accuracy/ Clarity/ Unambiguity

Authors should reveal all the equipments, funding resources and other aids employed in the research. Role of funding agencies or external supports in performing the research should be clearly mentioned in the publication (Masic *et al.* 2014). Authors should obey journal and institutional regulations and specify all the conflicts of interest (Dhammi and Haq 2017).

Proper Authorship and Acknowledgement

This is one of the most crucial and sensitive phases reflecting team work efforts in solving scientific problem. Authorship ascertains the liability and praise for the people who contribute to bring a scientific issue to a publication level (Marusic *et al.* 2006; Wager 2009; Wager and Kleinert 2013; Awais 2015).

Most of the guidelines emphasize that authorship should be given to a candidate only if he/she made a significant contribution in following:

- designing the research
- collecting and inferring the data
- drafting or critically revising the manuscript

People who perform the work and take the accountability for the research should get the credit and listed as authors.

Authorship, types and the number of publications should be discussed at the time of planning the research project (Claxton *et al.* 2005 a, b). At the time of writing a project proposal, decide on the things to be done, what will be done by whom and in what duration. A transparency and confirmation about each role should be maintained. Views of all the participants should be considered on the basis of their contribution in the work. A proof of these views and decisions should be kept. Every team must have a written conformity on authorship before the article is written. This is to diminish the disagree-

ment at final stage, when all the efforts have been put by the deserved members. The acknowledgments can be utilized to pay gratitude towards those who indirectly added to the work like providing the experimental material or research facilities etc. Utmost care should be taken that a person deserves to hold an authorship should not be included in the acknowledgement section (Graf et al. 2007; Peh and Ng 2009; Tarkang et al. 2017).

Articles addressing broader audience and that are beneficial for major parts of the society are mostly preferred for publication. Manuscripts that are innovative, noteworthy, well-planned and well written are the main focus of all the reputed journals.

CONCLUSION

Generally, articles on publication ethics emphasize on the responsibilities of publishing agencies, editors, academic institutes and authors to diminish the possibilities of plagiarism and research misconduct. However, limited discussion has been made on the ethics in allocation of authorship in publication. As authorship assignment is the foundation that may strengthen the thought of publication ethics at every step, it should be prioritize in research and publication world. Although publication agencies confirm the contribution of authors, they are naturally unable to control the cases where authorships are not allocated to worthy candidates. Hence, scientific groups and team of authors need to be righteous, understandable and answerable on publication ethics. As concluding remarks, publication ethics should be deeply considered by different players involved in the scientific world specifically authors who make it available to the society.

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