

EDITORIAL

The ethics of scientific publishing

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Over many years, the scientific community has identified various violations of the basic ethical principles of scientific publishing. These range from data falsification to plagiarism, redundant and duplicate publication, authorship issues and conflicts of interest.¹ Given the scope for fraud in the review and editorial as well as the writing process, there are many possible sources of scientific inconsistency which a journal has to deal with. Let us assume that reviewers perform thorough and unbiased reviews using the best of their knowledge, and also that we, the editors, do our very best to ensure a scientifically sound peer-review and decision process—certainly, every journal editor would hope that these two assumptions apply to his or her journal. Under this assumption, duplicate and redundant publication and, less frequently, plagiarism are the predominant faults to discuss. According to the World Association of Medical Editors, plagiarism “is the use of others’ published and unpublished ideas or words (or other intellectual property) without attribution or permission, and presenting them as new and original rather than derived from an existing source”. Redundant publication occurs when multiple papers,

without full cross reference in the text, share the same data or results. Inevitably, every now and then, DMFR receives submissions that are suspicious for redundant or duplicate publication. Reviewers have always been encouraged to perform a brief online search for duplicated material, and the editors also do so regularly. In addition, we will now be running all articles through CrossCheck, a plagiarism screening tool. This anti-plagiarism software allows for automated checking of any submission against a huge scientific database. For more details on how it works, refer to www.crossref.org/crosscheck/index.html. I believe that this tool will be very useful in helping the editors to keep the plagiarism rate of our journal as low as possible. I would also like to encourage everyone who is aware of suspicious publications in DMFR to notify the Editorial Board. Let’s make every possible attempt to keep DMFR clean!

Sincerely,

Ralf Schulze
Editor

References

1. Benos DJ, Fabres J, Farmer J, Gutierrez JP, Hennessy K, Kosek D, et al. Ethics and scientific publication. *Adv Physiol Educ* 2005; 29: 59–355.