PUBLISHING ETHICS: FABRICATION, FALSIFICATION AND PLAGIARISM

BES Education Workshop 2: Practical Publishing Advice

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Journal of Endocrinology
Journal of Molecular Endocrinology

http://joe.endocrinology-journals.org/
http://jme.endocrinology-journals.org/
Nothing to disclose
What Are “Publication Ethics”? 

Scientific publication remains entirely dependent on a high degree of trust in the authors.

For example:

• Is the manuscript an honest report of the work done?  
• Are the results reported correctly?  
• Are inconvenient results suppressed?  
• Is the analysis performed appropriately?  
• Who did the work and are they credited for it?  
• Is the text original?
What Are “Publication Ethics”? 

The major problems:

- Plagiarism
- Data falsification
- Data fabrication

No time to discuss:

- Authorship and author contributions
- Acknowledgements
- Conflicts of interest
How big is the problem?
Plagiarism

Self-plagiarism - Very common to re-use text (methods sections, reviews)

Plagiarism of others work – uncommon

Dual publication – very uncommon

• Copyright infringement

• Not compatible with statement that the work is original

• Language issues
Data falsification

“He’s been falsifying data for years”

© Punch
Why do scientists commit Research Misconduct?

"You are completely free to carry out whatever research you want, so long as you come to these conclusions."
What can a Journal do about it?

Minor self-plagiarism: authors rewrite/reword the offending text

More substantial plagiarism and any data falsification:

Apply COPE guidelines -

- All communication STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL
- Halt the review process (if not already published)
- Write to ALL authors asking for an explanation within a fixed time

Depending on the explanation:

- Reject manuscript (regardless of any review)
- Ban ALL authors from submission for a period of up to 5 years
- Write to senior authority of employing Institution

- If already published – retract the article
Some Do’s and Don’t’s

Don’t

• Use the same text you used on the last paper or review

• Copy other’s text – even if they write beautifully

• Remove outliers from a series – unless there is a clear reason – and then say what you have done in the paper

• Use the statistical test that works, when most don’t

• Don’t manipulate your images to obscure or emphasize data

• Don’t assume your co-authors have checked the paper – you will bear equal responsibility with them

Do

• Submit your work to the Society’s journals – they are your journals!