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Research ethics for authors

Karen Shashok, Granada, Spain

AuthorAID in the Eastern Mediterranean
kshashok@kshashok.com

Ethical and legal concerns have proliferated among editors of journals published in English-speaking countries.

As a result **the number of documents and assurances that editors require** from authors about the ethical conduct of research **is increasing.**

Noncompliance with these ethical requirements can lead to **rejection** of a submitted manuscript or **retraction** of a published article.

Noncompliance may be **unintentional** due to unfamiliarity with requirements or **intentional**, i.e., **with the intent to deceive or mislead** and give a false impression of compliance.

4 Areas:

- Plagiarism and good citation practice
- Secondary and duplicate publication
- Documents on ethics submitted with manuscripts
- Conflict of interest

Part 1

Plagiarism and good citation practice

Guidelines for Avoiding Plagiarism, Self-Plagiarism, and Questionable Writing Practices

The following guidelines are taken directly from "Avoiding plagiarism, self-plagiarism, and other questionable writing practices: A guide to ethical writing" by Miquel Roig.

**Rules of the game of
scientific writing: fair
play and plagiarism**

Gatekeepers and readers need to know which findings, ideas and words are **original** (reported for the first time in this article) and which are **taken from other sources**.

Acknowledge intellectual debts.

Give due credit and priority are highly valued as a good ethical practices.

Plagiarism is defined by Western gatekeepers as re-use of **words** without appropriate citation.

Western gatekeepers usually do not care why non-native English researchers use copy-and-paste to write manuscripts.

They consider it plagiarism—a serious form of ethical misconduct.

Definition 1

Plagiarism = “the deliberate or reckless use of someone else’s thoughts, words or ideas as one’s own, without clear attribution of their source”.

Mason PR. Plagiarism in scientific publications. J Infect Developing Countries 2009; 3(1): 1-4

Two kinds of plagiarism are recognized in scientific writing: plagiarism of **data** and plagiarism of **text**.

Editors and reviewers may suspect the authors of being dishonest about the scientific data, and may even suspect fraud.

“...the wording is the essence of the novelty.”

“Plagiarism of scientific text [...] might warrant reappraisal in articles by non-native speakers from developing countries with limited access to professional editorial assistance.”

Vessal K, Habibzadeh F. Rules of the game in scientific writing: fair play and plagiarism. The Lancet 2007; 369: 641

“Falsifying the text may be an indication that data are also falsified. Editors take particular note, therefore, of repeated and extensive plagiarism in a paper submitted to them, because such an observation raises doubts about the integrity of the research being reported.”

Mason PR. Plagiarism in scientific publications. J Infect Developing Countries 2009; 3(1): 1-4

Definition 2

Substantial **unattributed textual copying** of another's work means the unattributed verbatim or nearly verbatim copying of sentences and paragraphs which materially **mislead the ordinary reader regarding the contributions of the author.**

Office of Research Integrity

http://ori.dhhs.gov/education/guidelines_to_avoid_plagiarism.shtml

Definition 3

Plagiarism is a form of piracy that involves the **use of text or other items** (figures, images, tables) without permission or acknowledgment. **Deceit plays a central role.**

Council of Science Editors

http://www.councilscienceeditors.org/editorial_policies/whitepaper/3-1_misconduct.cfm

Definition 4. Translation plagiarism

The **institution's legal department** said it could not be considered plagiarism.

But **COPE** agreed that plagiarism does not have to be word-for-word the same, and **plagiarism can be proven even in two different languages.**

Committee on Publication Ethics

<http://publicationethics.org/case/definition-plagiarism>

Is cut-and-paste a good solution for writing problems?

Wikimedia
Commons



Don't copy and paste from other articles. The English may not be very good.

Many articles in an unreadable writing style are published even in top journals.

**Vasconcelos SMR.
Writing up research
in English: Choice
or necessity? Rev
Col Bras Cir 2007;
34:1-2**

would tell us that writing well can boost the authors' chances of getting published. Even so, attention to language among scientists is still scant, which would account for the number of unreadable articles published even in top-tier journals. In a Letter published in the *British Medical Journal*⁶, the author reports that "over the past 20 years..." many articles have shown "that medical information (such as journal articles, informed consent forms) is written in an 'unreadable' writing style." Among the authors of such texts are NES researchers, as even those writing in their mother tongue can be poor writers. However, improving writing skills in the native

Conclusion:

Citations problems cause a negative impression on gatekeepers, can prevent acceptance of the manuscript, and may have additional negative consequences for the authors' career.

How to improve citation accuracy and avoid plagiarism?

1. Avoid copy-and-paste.
2. Write or revise all the text yourself.
3. Insert provisional references (author-year) in the first draft.
4. Paraphrase (1 or 2 lines).
5. Always use “quotation marks” to enclose verbatim quotations (1 or 2 lines), and provide the reference.

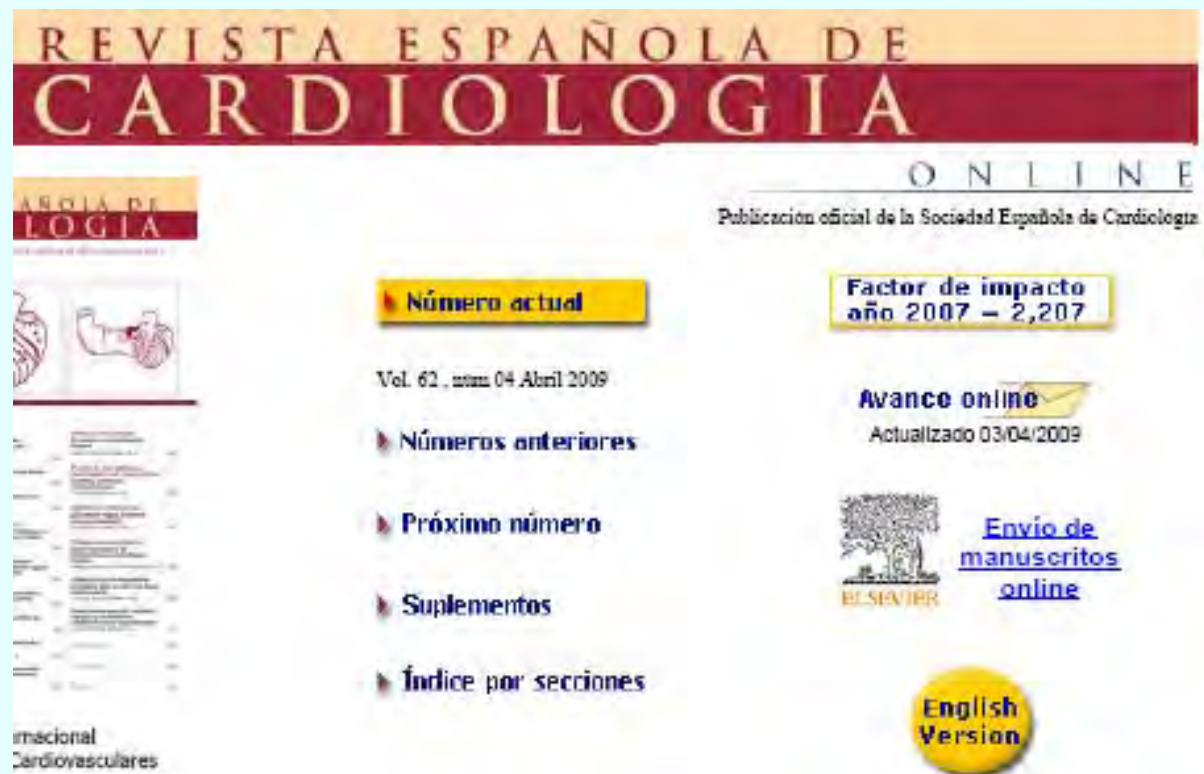
Guidelines on how to improve citation accuracy and avoid plagiarism

Roig M. Guidelines for Avoiding Plagiarism, Self-Plagiarism, and Questionable Writing Practices
http://ori.dhhs.gov/education/guidelines_to_avoid_plagiarism.shtml

Roig, M. Avoiding plagiarism, self-plagiarism, and other questionable writing practices: A guide to ethical writing. St Johns University. 03/12/2009.
http://ori.hhs.gov/education/products/roig_st_johns/

Part 2

Simultaneous publication, Secondary publication, Publication in another language



REVISTA ESPAÑOLA DE
CARDIOLOGÍA

ONLINE

Publicación oficial de la Sociedad Española de Cardiología

Número actual

Vol. 62, núm. 04, Abril 2009

Números anteriores

Próximo número

Suplementos

Índice por secciones

**Factor de impacto
año 2007 – 2,207**

Avance online
Actualizado 03/04/2009

**Envío de
manuscritos
online**

ELSEVIER

English Version

English
Version

It is **acceptable** to make the findings available to a different audience or readership, but

- copyright must be respected, and

- the authors' intention to publish the same material more than once must be explained to the editors in advance.

It is **not acceptable** to republish the same study without telling the editors.

Duplicate publication is considered a violation of good publication ethics and can result in **retraction** of all published versions of the article.

The **authorship statement** is intended to prevent duplicate or multiple publication.

If authors intentionally mislead the editors, they may:

-retract the article or publish a notice of duplicate publication

-ask the author's institution to investigate or take punitive action against the author

1. Tobin MJ. Notice of duplicate publication. *Am J Respir Crit Care Med* 2002;166:625.

International Committee of Medical Journal Editors. Uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals. Writing and editing for biomedical publication. Updated October 2008.

<http://www.icmje.org/#over>

III.D.3. Acceptable Secondary Publication

- 1.** The authors have received approval from the editors of both journals.
- 2.** The priority of the primary publication is respected by a publication interval of at least 1 week.
- 3.** The paper for secondary publication is intended for a different group of readers.

III.D.3. Acceptable Secondary Publication

4. The secondary version faithfully reflects the data and interpretations of the primary version.
5. The footnote on the title page of the secondary version informs readers that the paper has been published in whole or in part and states the primary reference.

III.D.3. Acceptable Secondary Publication

6. The title of the secondary publication should indicate that it is a secondary publication (complete republication, abridged republication, complete translation, or abridged translation) of a primary publication. **Of note, the NLM does not consider translations to be “republications.”**

World Association of Medical Editors (WAME) guidelines

Publication ethics policies for medical journals; Originality, prior publication and media relations.

<http://www.wame.org/resources/publication-ethics-policies-for-medical-journals#orig>

Republication of a paper in another language, or simultaneously in multiple journals with different audiences, **may be acceptable**, provided that there is **full and prominent disclosure** of its original source at the time of submission of the manuscript.

At the time of submission, authors should disclose details of related papers they have authored, even if in a different language, similar papers in press, and any closely related papers previously published or currently under review at another journal.

How can we avoid inadvertent duplicate publication?

Follow the **ICMJE** and **WAME** recommendations, and your **national journals commission** recommendations.

If you have questions, ask the editor.

Part 3

Good submittal practice to document good ethics

SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

All abbreviations must be spelled out at their first use in the abstract, first use in the manuscript, first use in précis and defined in every table or figure legend in which they are used.

	Must be submitted with every manuscript:	Please check off additional material included:
Transmittal Letter	<input type="checkbox"/> Corresponding author's name and contact information <input type="checkbox"/> Disclosure of any conflict of interest OR blanket statement that no author has any conflict of interest. <input type="checkbox"/> Noted if it is an AAO meeting paper	<input type="checkbox"/> Abstract exceptions <input type="checkbox"/> Prior/repetitive publication <input type="checkbox"/> Precedence <input type="checkbox"/> Group authorship <input type="checkbox"/> Consort agreement <input type="checkbox"/> Request for waiver of any statement that should be in Methods and isn't (IRB, HIPAA, Clinical Trial Registration, Declaration of Helsinki)

Ethical and legal concerns have proliferated among journals published in English-speaking countries.

The documents that must be submitted with manuscripts are intended to **prevent legal and bureaucratic problems for editors and publishers.**

They do not prevent all problems...

JAMA's new rule on whistleblowers' silence during investigations creates controversy

Tanne JH. JAMA's new rule on whistleblower's silence during investigations creates controversy. *BMJ* 2009; 338: 790



JAMA editor Catherine DeAngelis: no comment

but may decrease the frequency of problems.

There are concerns that not all the information authors provide in these documents is accurate.

Errors arise from unfamiliarity with the journal's expectations and requirements, carelessness, and occasionally, intentional deception.

Because of concerns about **ghost authorship**, experts in editorial ethics recommend that all persons who participated in the writing or editing of the manuscript but who are not authors should be named in the **Acknowledgments**.

3. Acknowledgment Statement. Authors should obtain written permission from all individuals named in an Acknowledgment, since readers may infer their endorsement of data and conclusions. The corresponding author must sign the following statement:

- I certify that all persons who have made substantial contributions to the work reported in this manuscript (eg, data collection, analysis, or writing or editing assistance) but who do not fulfill the authorship criteria are named with their specific contributions in an Acknowledgment in the manuscript.

What documents need to be submitted?

- 1. Cover letter (statement of originality, summary of content, list of suggested reviewers, contact information, etc.)**
- 2. Authorship form (signatures)**
- 3. Conflict of interest disclosure**
- 4. Copyright transfer**
- 5. Manuscript checklist**

What documents need to be submitted?

6. Randomized clinical trials: trial registration number, ethics committee (IRB) approval, informed consent, CONSORT checklist...

***The Lancet* Covering Letter**

1. explain why your paper should be published in *The Lancet*—a leading international general medical journal—rather than elsewhere (eg, a specialty journal)

2. indicate what could shorten your paper—the full paper can be reviewed and a shorter version published

Annals of Emergency Medicine

Cover Letter

1. identify and briefly **describe the manuscript**
2. list the **title** of the article
3. identify the **journal category** for which your manuscript is intended

Annals of Emergency Medicine

Cover Letter

4. identify the **corresponding author**

5. indicate whether it is a randomized controlled trial or other standardized **study type** described below

6. provide full information about any form of **prior publication**

Annals of Emergency Medicine

Cover Letter

7. describe any situation that might be perceived as a **conflict of interest**
8. list any **copyright constraints**

Annals of Emergency Medicine

Required Submission Documents

1. Cover Letter
2. Manuscript Submission Agreement
3. Author Contributions Statement
4. Title Page
5. Abstract, Article, References
6. letters granting permission to the *Annals* office

Annals of Emergency Medicine

Additional Required Documents

- 7.** an original hard copy of any figures you included
- 8.** The CONSORT checklist (for RCTs)
- 9.** Clinical Trials Registration information
- 10.** Permissions for material published elsewhere previously

Annals of Emergency Medicine

Additional Required Documents

11. Photographs: patient's signed release authorizing publication

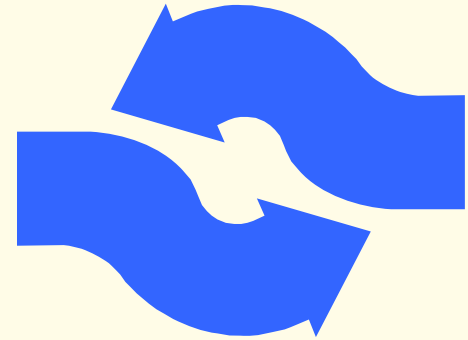
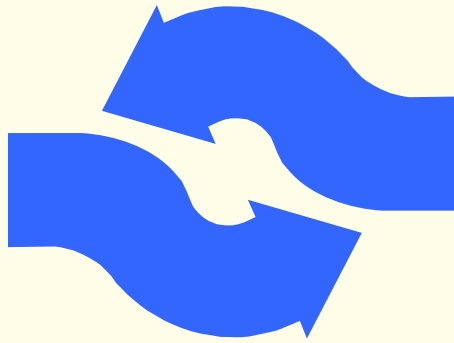
12. Statement of clearance to publish

13. Written permission from any persons acknowledged by name

14. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval

Part 4

Conflict of Interest



WAME Conflict of Interest Policy

Statement (<http://www.wame.org/conflict-of-interest-in-peer-reviewed-medical-journals>)

Conflict of interest exists when there is a divergence between an individual's **private interests** (competing interests) and his or her **responsibilities to scientific and publishing activities...**

Conflict of interest

...such that a reasonable observer might wonder if the individual's behavior or judgment was motivated by considerations of his or her competing interests.

Types of competing interests (WAME)

- Financial ties
- Academic commitments
- Personal relationships
- Political or religious beliefs
- Institutional affiliations

Types of competing interests (*PLoS Medicine* **editors**)

- Reimbursement for attending a conference or symposium
- Fees for speaking
- Fees for organizing education
- Funds for research or for a member of staff
- Fees for consulting

Types of competing interests (*JAMA*)

...including financial interests:
employment, affiliation, grants, funding,
consultancies, honoraria, speakers'
bureau, stock ownership, expert
testimony, royalties, patents

All potential conflicts of interest
disclosed in the **Acknowledgments**
section

Declaring and managing COI (WAME)

COIs are ubiquitous and cannot be eliminated altogether.

However, they can be managed constructively so that they **make the least possible intrusion on journal content and credibility.**

How will COI be managed by journals? (WAME)

- Publish all relevant COI disclosures with the publication
- Not consider a manuscript further**
- Exclude reviewers or editors with COI from peer review or decision-making
- Investigate by impartial observers

Transparency and public accountability are valued.

When in doubt, check the **ICMJE**, **WAME** or **COPE** websites, consult your **national journals commission**, or ask the **editor** for guidance.

Thank-you very much for your participation.



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