

Editorial

From the Editor's Desk



The disease of Plagiarism

The plagiarism is when one takes the idea, words or thoughts of someone else and presents as his/her own work. Plagiarism has cursed academics for centuries all together. It can be intentional or accidental and can be in terms of text, data or even images. In academics, plagiarism is considered a serious offence and is equivalent to fraud or stealing. While plagiarism can have legal implications and can be punished in the court of law (if copyright violation is involved), mostly it carries disciplinary action against the offender as it is against the ethics of publishing and academics. Above all, it is harbinger of disrepute for the accused and the institution.

Recently, New England Journal of Medicine, one of the most reputed journals in medicine retracted one article in 'Images in clinical medicine', a sought after and popular category of articles. The image that was published in the article had been previously published on the cover page of an Ophthalmology journal in 2015. The journal retracted the article when it was brought to its notice by another researcher from United States. In fact the clinical details of the image provided in the retracted manuscript did not match the original description. This case highlights the gravity of the problem, which can be encountered.

It is important therefore to identify the root cause of plagiarism and address that rather than making strict laws. History is witness that no law is ever sufficient to prevent wrongdoings. One major cause of plagiarism may be the pressure to publish as is said in an old saying 'publish or perish'. Other reasons may be for the personal growth and recognition that one gets with the publications. Academicians should be aware that it is easier than ever to detect plagiarism in the era of Internet. Also one cannot plead non guilty in the case of accidental plagiarism.

Several online softwares are available now a days (free as well as paid), which can be used to detect plagiarism and most reputed journals are doing a routine plagiarism check on all the articles. Delhi ophthalmological society has recently subscribed to one such software and all the articles would be undergoing plagiarism check henceforth. So let us all publish with passion and publish responsibly.

Dr. Vinod Kumar
(MS DNB MNAMS FRCS)

Editor, Delhi Journal of Ophthalmology

Associate Professor, Vitreo-retina Services

Dr. Rajendra Prasad Centre for Ophthalmic Sciences,
All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi



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