

Plagiarism

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This article is in no way meant to provide an exhaustive over view of the topic, but will pry to present the topic from perspective of Journal of Trauma and Orthopaedics (JTO). Plagiarism is simply copy-paste of content written by another, into ones own article. And this is one of the commonest problems we face at JTO where we receive manuscripts in which a large part is copy pasted either from another article or from any source on the internet. We wish to make our readers and authors realise that this is UNETHICAL and completely discouraged. Severe backlashes like blacklisting by journals irreparable damage to academic reputation can result from such practices to the extent that authors can be sentenced to a form of 'Academic Jail' where no journal will be ready to accept any article with there name in the authors list. We sincerely request our authors and our readers to be clear about the defination and concept of plagiarism. Oxford dictionary defines it as "the wrongful appropriation or purloining and publication as one's own, of the ideas, or the expression of the ideas of another" Thus its not limited to simple copy paste but also includes imitation of ideas and expressions. The Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and World association Medical Editors (WAME) add another dimension of whether the plagiarised part is referenced (acknowledged) in the new publication. This is one of the issues that we faced when we asked the authors to revise the manuscript as it had plagiarised sentences in it. The authors stated that since these sentences had referenced the original article it is not plagiarism. We wish to state this clearly that any sentence directly copy pasted (more than 6 consecutive words) irrespective of whether it is referenced or not, is considered as plagiarism. Infact COPE guidelines go a bit further to classify plagiarism into plagiarism of ideas, plagiarism of text/content, Mosaic plagiarism and Self plagiarism (details of which are provided on COPE website).

Another more innocent aspect of plagiarism is noted by us at JTO is unintentional Plagiarism. Here actually the authors are unaware about concept of plagiarism. This mostly involves articles written by postgraduates where they simply copy paste from any source to build up the introduction or discussion. They are mostly doing this for their thesis and they continue to do this for the manuscript. This is the most important aim of this article to make these authors aware that copy paste in any format (even thesis) is unethical and should not be practised. Authors these days find it very easy to find online content which they can use in their articles, however they should realise that once their article is published online, all the content they have plagiarised will also show up in search engines thus revealing the plagiarised nature of their document. Even for the editorial team it is very easy to detect plagiarism by using online softwares and even google search. The bottom line is if you plagiarise, you will get caught and consequences can be very embarrassing. The best way is to read and re-read the manuscript, specially if it is written by your resident or fellow and specifically ask them about plagiarism. The authors can themselves use online plagiarism softwares like 'plagiarism checker' and check their manuscripts for plagiarism.

I believe plagiarism is completely unnecessary (but has severe consequences) and something that can be avoided by taking care while preparing the manuscript.

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