

Publication Ethics

Guidelines On Good Publication Practice

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Learning Outcomes

After going through this unit learners will be able

- To know about the Publication Ethics : definition, introduction and importance
- To distinguish about the Best Practices / standards setting initiatives and guidelines : COPE, WAME etc
- To infer Selective reporting and misrepresentation of data
- To search for reasons, evidence and/or argument for warrant that might support one belief rather than another

Research Guidelines

- “Hippocratic Oath,” dates back to 500 B.C.
- Nuremberg Code
- Declaration of Helsinki
- COPE - Committee on Publication Ethics
- International Committee of Medical Journals Editors (ICMJE)
- WAME

COPE-1997

- Started with 90 Members
- 13500+ Members from >100 countries



*COPE Founders: Mike Farthing,
Richard Smith and Richard Horton*

COPE addresses

- Study design and ethical approval,
- Data analysis,
- Authorship,
- Conflict of interests,
- The peer review process,
- Redundant publication,

- Plagiarism,
- Duties of editors,
- Media relations,
- Advertising, and
- How to deal with misconduct

Study Design And Ethical Approval

- Laboratory and clinical research should be driven by protocol; approved by ethics committee.
- Research protocols should seek to answer specific questions, rather than just collect data.
- Agreement on Protocols, role of Contributors, statistical tools
- Fully informed consent from Human Subjects
- Animal Experiments
- Quality control, and the frequent review and long term retention (may be up to 15 years) of all records and primary outputs

Data Analysis

- Sources of data should be disclosed.
- Methods of analysis must be explained in detail, and referenced.
- The post hoc analysis of subgroups is acceptable, as long as this is disclosed.
- The discussion section of a paper should explain any issue of bias and how they have been dealt with in the design and interpretation of the study.

Authorship

- Due Credit
- Early planning of Authorship contribution
- Accountability of Authors
- Careful reading of the target journal's "Advice to Authors" is advised, in the light of current uncertainties.

Conflicts of interest

- Such interests, where relevant, must be declared to editors by researchers, authors, and reviewers.
- Editors should also disclose relevant conflicts of interest to their readers. If in doubt, disclose.
- Sometimes editors may need to withdraw from the review and selection process for the relevant submission.

Peer review

Peer reviewers are external experts chosen by editors to provide written opinions, with the aim of improving the study.

- (1)** Suggestions from authors for reviewers may be, but no obligation on editors to use those suggested.
- (2)** The duty of confidentiality must be maintained by expert reviewers.
- (3)** The submitted manuscript should not be retained or copied.
- (4)** Reviewers/ editors should not use of the data, arguments, or interpretations.
- (5)** should provide speedy, accurate, courteous, unbiased and justifiable reports.
- (6)** If reviewers suspect misconduct, they should write in confidence to the editor.
- (7)** Details of peer review, selection, and appeals processes on Website.
- (8)** Journals should regularly audit their acceptance rates and publication times.

Redundant publication

- Redundant publication occurs when two or more papers, without full cross reference, share the same hypothesis, data, discussion points, or conclusions.
- Presented papers in conferences- Full Disclosure
- Translation- Full Disclosure
- Preprints- Full Disclosure

Plagiarism

- Plagiarism is derived from the Latin word “plagiare” which means to “kidnap.”
- Plagiarism ranges from the unreferenced use of others’ published and unpublished ideas, including research grant applications to submission under “new” authorship of a complete paper, sometimes in a different language.
- All sources should be disclosed, and if large amounts of other people’s written or illustrative material is to be used, permission must be sought.

Duties of Editors

- (1)** Editors' decisions sh be based only on the **paper's importance, originality, clarity, and the relevance to the remit of the journal.**
- (2)** Studies that challenge previous work published in the journal should be given an especially sympathetic hearing.
- (3)** Studies reporting negative results should not be excluded.
- (4)** Peer reviewed before publication, taking into full account possible bias due to related or conflicting interests.
- (5)** Editors must treat all submitted papers as confidential.
- (6)** When a published paper is subsequently found to contain major flaws, editors must accept responsibility for correcting the record prominently and promptly.

Media relations

- (1) Authors should give balanced account of their work to media.
- (2) Simultaneous publication in the mass media and a peer reviewed journal is advised.
- (3) Authors should help journalists to produce accurate reports, but refrain from supplying additional data.
- (4) Patients volunteers should be informed of the results by the authors before the mass media, especially if there are clinical implications.
- (5) Authors to be informed of any media policies operated by the journal in which their work is to be published.

Advertising

- Many scientific journals and meetings derive significant income from advertising.
 - Reprints may also be lucrative.
- (1)** Editorial decisions must not be influenced by advertising revenue or reprint potential: editorial and advertising administration must be clearly separated.
 - (2)** Advertisements that mislead must be refused.
 - (3)** Reprints should be published as they appear in the journal.

Dealing with misconduct

- (1) The objective is aware researchers about ethics.
- (2) The examination must focus, on the **intention** of the researcher, author, editor, reviewer or publisher involved.
- (3) Deception may be by intention, by reckless disregard of possible consequences, or by negligence.
- (4) Codes of practice may raise awareness, but can never be exhaustive.

Investigating misconduct

- (1)** Editors should not simply reject papers that raise questions of misconduct. They are ethically obliged to pursue the case. However, knowing how to investigate and respond to possible cases of misconduct is difficult.
- (2)** COPE is always willing to advise, but for legal reasons, can only advise on anonymised cases.
- (3)** It is for the editor to decide what action to take.

Serious misconduct

- (1)** Editors must take all allegations and suspicions of misconduct seriously, but they must recognize that they do not usually have either the legal legitimacy or the means to conduct investigations into serious cases.
- (2)** The editor must decide when to alert the employers of the accused author(s).
- (3)** Some evidence is required, but if employers have a process for investigating accusations—as they are increasingly required to do—then editors do not need to assemble a complete case.
- (4)** If editors are presented with convincing evidence—perhaps by reviewers—of serious misconduct, they should immediately pass this on to the employers.
- (5)** If accusations of serious misconduct are not accompanied by convincing evidence, then editors should confidentially seek expert advice.
- (6)** If the experts raise serious questions about the research, then editors should notify the employers.

(7) If the experts find no evidence of misconduct, the editorial processes should proceed in the normal way.

(8) Where there is no employer to whom this can be referred, and the author(s) are registered doctors, cases can be referred to the General Medical Council.

(9) If, there is no organization, Legal advice will then be essential.

(10) If employer has not conducted an adequate investigation of a serious accusation. Legal advice will be essential.

(11) Authors should be given the opportunity to respond to accusations of serious misconduct

Less serious misconduct

- less serious cases of misconduct, such as redundant publication, deception over authorship, or failure to declare conflict of interest.
- Editors should remember that accusations of even minor misconduct may have serious implications for the author(s), and it may then be necessary to ask the employers to investigate.
- Authors should be given the opportunity to respond to any charge of minor misconduct.
- If convinced of wrong doing, editors may wish to adopt some of the sanctions outlined below.

Sanctions

- (1) A letter of explanation, where there appears to be a genuine misunderstanding of principles.
- (2) A letter of reprimand and warning as to future conduct.
- (3) A formal letter to the relevant head of institution or funding body.
- (4) Publication of a notice of redundant publication or plagiarism.
- (5) An editorial giving full details of the misconduct.
- (6) Refusal to accept future submissions from the individual, unit, or institution responsible for the misconduct, for a stated period.
- (7) Formal withdrawal or retraction of the paper from the scientific literature, informing other editors and the indexing authorities.
- (8) Reporting the case to the General Medical Council, or other such authority or organization which can investigate and act with due process.

International Committee of Medical Journals Editors (ICMJE)

- The ICMJE was established in 1978, in Vancouver, British, Columbia, Canada, by a group of medical journal editors.
- ICMJE developed roles and responsibilities of the authors, contributors, reviewers, and editors.
- Steps of manuscript preparation, submission, and editorial issues related to publication in medical journals are also discussed and drafted.
- The uniform requirements for manuscript submitted to biomedical journals, which most of the journals are following were drafted by ICMJE.

WAME (World Association of Medical Editors)

- Established in 1995 by ICMJE
- WAME is a **nonprofit voluntary association of editors** of peer-reviewed medical journals from countries throughout the world
- who seek to foster international cooperation among and education of medical journal editors.
- Membership in WAME is free and all decision-making editors of peer-reviewed medical journals are eligible to join.
- Membership is also available to selected scholars in journal editorial policy and peer review.
- WAME has more than **1830 members representing more than 1000 journals from 92 countries**

Objectives:

- To facilitate worldwide cooperation and communication among editors
- To improve editorial standards, professionalism through education, self-criticism and self-regulation;
- To encourage research on the principles and practice of medical editing.
- High ethical and scientific principles
- To publish original, important, well-documented peer-reviewed articles on clinical and laboratory research;
- To provide continuing education in basic and clinical sciences to support informed clinical decision making;

- to enable physicians to remain informed in one or more areas of medicine;
- to improve public health internationally by improving the quality of medical care, disease prevention and medical research;
- to foster responsible and balanced debate on controversial issues and policies affecting medicine and health care;
- to promote peer review as a vehicle for scientific discourse and quality assurance in medicine and to support efforts to improve peer review;
- to achieve the highest level of ethical medical journalism;

- to promote self-audit and scientifically supported improvement in the editing process;
- to produce publications that are timely, credible and enjoyable to read;
- to forecast important issues, problems and trends in medicine and health care;
- to inform readers about non-clinical aspects of medicine and public health, including political, philosophic, ethical, environmental, economic, historical and cultural issues;
- to improve the human condition and safeguard the integrity of sciences.

Mechanisms for Regulating Research

- Research Ethic Committees (RECs) or Institutional Review Boards (IRBs)
- The MoM of the REC/IRB must be documented and filed.
- Decisions of the RECs/IRBs must be made available to all in the organization.
- If a member's study is being reviewed, then he must withdraw from the discussion.
- Decisions by consensus or vote is taken.