

**A CLEAR CASE OF PROFESSIONAL MISCONDUCT: DUPLICATE PUBLICATION  
AND PLAGIARISM**

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In light of uncontrolled evolution of journals, the standards of scientific communications have shown a gradual decline. In the name of open access publication, many journals and publishers have emerged throughout the world undermining the real motive of scholarly communications. With many publishers in fray to share the income generated from the article processing charges, the journals are in a hurry to accept most of the submissions without adequate peer evaluation. Copy and paste contents of previously published papers, creating duplicate publications with minor changes to the original one and plagiarism of papers without crediting the original authors (not citing the source) have been on the rise ever since, we saw increasing open access journal publishers. Pay per publication is now a common scenario in scientific publications

where the journals are only bothered about the collection of publication charges and are least concerned about the quality and integrity of the scientific communication. A lot remains to be answered regarding the kind of peer-reviewing process that a journal follows, if any, before a manuscript is considered suitable for publication.

Lack of efficient pre-publication peer-reviewing is contributing to increased misconduct among journal publications and reduced scientific standards. Many journals in the era of open access publication accept papers submitted to them without adequate peer-review and with a fear of competition of losing the manuscript charges.

I present you a clear case of plagiarised and duplicate publication from different departments of the same institute. A

manuscript titled “Diphyllobothriasis in a nine-year-old child in India: a case report” was published from the department of microbiology in the year 2011 by Ramana KV et al [1]. This paper was later hijacked and published again by two other authors from other departments of the same institute (paediatrics and medicine departments) [2]. The interesting fact about this plagiarized paper is that it was published after 2 years of publication of the original manuscript. A detailed examination of this paper has revealed that much of the case presentation, investigations and even discussion were copied as it is and contain almost the same references as the original paper.

Another interesting observation noted includes two pictures cited by the authors of paper under scrutiny for plagiarism, a picture of egg supposedly of *Diphyllobothrium latum* and another picture revealing the adult worm resembling tape worm. A search on Google has showed that the picture of the supposed adult worm was copied from an internet page belonging to the department of veterinary medicine, university of Pennsylvania [3]. The image showing the ova of fish tape worm was acquired from an internet page of unknown source [4].

This case highlights the importance of guidelines provided by committee on publication ethics (COPE) for journal publishers [5]. The important points to be noted among COPE guidelines include protection of intellectual property and copyrights, regular investigation for possible professional misconduct and publishing corrections, clarifications and retractions in

the form of erratum. COPE also identifies the specific roles of editors that include complete accountability of published content, have mechanisms to identify the quality of submissions before they are published and not compromising on the intellectual content and ethical standards for the sake of publication [6]. Author responsibilities and code of conduct regarding journal communications as recommended by world conference on research integrity and identified as international standards for authors, proposed basic responsibilities of authors that include adherence to non-plagiarism, originality, transparency, honesty, non-fabrication, non-falsification and data manipulation [7].

This case should be considered as just a tip of iceberg and that regular evaluation of published content in many open access journals would certainly reveal many more of such incidences of professional misconduct. Considering the fact that ethics is a subjective matter and that authors submit their work to a journal in good faith, efficient editorial screening followed by constructive peer-review by experts related to the subject matter will definitely contribute to improved quality of journal publications.

## References

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