Plagiarism

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What is plagiarism?

- plagiarus (L) – kidnapper
- Presentation of the documented words or ideas of another as his or her own, without attribution appropriate for the medium of presentation
- It is a serious scientific misconduct

"...practices that seriously deviate from those that are commonly accepted within the scientific community for proposing, conducting and reporting research"

Office of Research Integrity, www.ori.org
-versus Old Plagiarism

Then
- Slow
- Laborious

Now
- Faster
- Little effort expended
- Vast array of tools available

Creativity is fine but plagiarism is faster…
What is cyber-plagiarism?

- Copying ideas, text, material from the web without proper accreditation
- Digital plagiarism includes cyber-plagiarism; it is a term used to describe copying using computers
Common types of plagiarism

- Word for word
- Paraphrasing
- Plagiarism of ideas
- Plagiarism of authorship
- Self-plagiarism
- Plagiarism of secondary sources
- Plagiarism of the form of the source

International Dimensions

- Committee of Publication Ethics (COPE) reports list only 2-3 cases of plagiarism per year.
- Much bigger problem in schools, colleges (24% of college students in UK confess to have plagiarized)
- Maybe a serious problem in Indian medical journals (IJP 1/100 manuscripts -detected)
- Loss of scientific credibility
Why do people plagiarize?

- Ignorance
- Lack of knowledge on the ethics of scholarly writing
- Ambition, fierce competition
- Pressure from seniors
- Publish or perish system
- Poor writing skills
- Faster
“Really? Someone told me it's not plagiarism if they're dead.”
How to avoid plagiarism?

If you reproduce something word for word it must be acknowledged.

- For short quotes, use quotation marks in the sentence.
- For longer quotes indent the entire passage.
- If you have used a table, chart, diagram etc., cite the source directly below.
- It is not enough to have cited the reference somewhere in the text.

Paraphrasing without giving references is also plagiarism.
Tackling plagiarism

- Author
  - Paper
  - Editor
  - Referees
  - Publish
    - Retraction
      - Plagiarism revealed

- Suspects plagiarism
  - Editor
  - Rejection
How to detect plagiarism?

- Alta Vista, Google – search for phrases
- Manual search with key references
- Internet based tool - Document Source Analysis (www.turnitin.com)
- Look for different reference styles in the same paper
- Changes in language
- Not relevant to paper
- Be up to date
What is the antidote?

- Training in scientific writing /ethics
- Making the consequences clear
- Catch ‘em young
- Expose plagiarizers no matter what the consequences would be
- If you find any article that has been plagiarized bring it to the notice of the editor

For the triumph of evil it is only necessary for good men to do nothing

Edmund Burke
What can a journal do?

- Clear policy to be stated
- Conduct workshops for faculty and students
- Referees
- Punishment should be harsh, consistent, commensurate to the seriousness of the crime
- Uniform for all
Is plagiarism punishable by law?

In the U.S.

- Punishable by fines between $100 and $50,000, and up to one year in jail.
- If a plagiarist earns more than $2,500 from copyrighted material - up to $250,000 in fines and up to ten years in jail.

In India

- Indian Copyright act (1957) Copyright Amendment Act 1994 – fines Rs. 50,000/= to 2,00,000/= and jail from 6 months to 3 years.
Who is responsible for the increase in plagiarism?

- Uncritical editors
- Unscrupulous authors
- Apathetic / avaricious teachers
- Gullible students
- Internet
- Computer technology
- Falling ethical standards
And finally...

“If you steal from one author it’s plagiarism. If you steal from many it’s research.”

(Wilson Mizner)
Say No to Plagiarism

How important are ethics in today's society?

Thank you