

EDITORIAL

PLAGIARISM FREE ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

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Plagiarism is found to be the most common form of misconduct among researchers across the globe. It is particularly affecting the biomedical sciences communities engaged in writing and reporting research. Unfortunately many young writers are not aware of the various types of plagiarism they might unintentionally indulge in¹. Even in some cases, the writers do not consider plagiarism as a serious issue. Plagiarism can range from simple dishonesty in reporting parts of other's work without proper attribution to a more serious issue such as duplicate publication. With the emergence of new technologies and search engines it has become easier to copy and paste from innumerable sources and yet not citing the exact source. As one can accumulate information in a fraction of time, but quite often the creative skills and ability to write one's own original thoughts do not match the required level of output. Irrespective of position and ranks, this situation is in existence at all levels of education and research. In the current situation of knowledge explosion, we are also witnessing an increasing trend in the duplication, falsification and unverifiable data presentation in student reports, theses and even journal articles written by researchers. It is very important for the younger generation of medical students to follow ethical guidelines while writing any scientific publications². Senior researchers and experienced writer are duty bound to explain basic reasons why plagiarism warrants a punitive action.

Most of the guidelines adopted by academic institutions tactlessly focus on the immoral aspect hence presenting it just as a grave sin, which needs to be punished. While the other accompanying drawback is that how plagiarism weakens one's own ability to refine skills of writing to document original thoughts and outcomes in research is grossly impaired³. It is therefore important that while creating awareness about plagiarism as a punishable offence, it is equally important to explain to the students and young scholars that how damaging it could be for their own career. Stressing to avoid plagiarism should not just be taken as a way to protect one's writing from being labeled as a forgery, but it would show that by appropriately citing references and paraphrasing the text one can demonstrate how well read the author is and how strong are the conceptual depths. The other positive aspect in citing references is that it provides the readers guidance from where further information can be obtained.

From the available literature and reports on addressing the menace of plagiarism as a form of academic and research misconduct it becomes the responsibility of the institutions of higher learning to create more awareness about misconduct in research in general and about plagiarism in particular. However, institutions and publishers in developing countries must jointly work to nurture a culture of plagiarism free academic environment.

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