

Simultaneous Submission/ Multiple, Duplicate Publication

Authors have an obligation to make sure their paper is based on original—never before published—research. Intentionally submitting or re-submitting work for duplicate publication is considered a breach of publishing ethics.

- Simultaneous submission occurs when a person submits a paper to different publications at the same time, which can result in more than one journal publishing that particular paper.
- Duplicate/multiple publication occurs when two or more papers, without full cross-reference, share essentially the same hypotheses, data, discussion points, and/or conclusions.¹ This can occur in varying degrees: literal duplication, partial but substantial duplication, or even duplication by paraphrasing.²

One of the main reasons duplicate publication of original research is considered unethical, is that it can result in "inadvertent double-counting or inappropriate weighting of the results of a single study, which distorts the available evidence".³

There are certain situations in which the publishers of two journals might agree in advance to use the "duplicate work".³ These include:

- Combined editorials (e.g. about a plagiarism case involving the two journals).
- (Clinical) guidelines, position statements.
- Translations of articles—provided that prior approval has been granted by the first Publisher, and that full and prominent disclosure of its original source is given at the time of submission.²

The main rule of thumb: articles submitted for publication must be original and must not have been submitted to any other publication. At the time of submission, authors must disclose any details of related papers (also when in a different language), similar papers in press, and translations.

While the boundaries around duplicate publication may vary from field to field, all publishers have requirements for submitting papers. It's a good idea to make sure you fully understand them to avoid violating the process.

Guide to Duplicate Submission/Publication and How to Prevent It*

Action	What is it?	Is it unethical?	What should you do?
Simultaneous submission	Submitting a paper to two or more journals at the same time.	Yes. Submission is not permitted as long as a manuscript is under review with another journal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Avoid submitting a paper to more than one publication at a time. ■ Even if a submitted paper is currently under review and you do not know the status, wait to hear back from the publisher before approaching another journal, and then only if the first publisher will not be publishing the paper.
Duplicate publication	When an author submits a paper or portions of his or her own paper that has been previously published to another journal, without disclosing prior submission(s).	Yes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Avoid submitting a previously published paper for consideration in another journal. ■ Avoid submitting papers that describe essentially the same research to more than one journal. ■ Always provide full disclosure about any previous submissions (including meeting presentations and posting of results in registries) that might be regarded as duplicate publication.³ ■ This should include disclosing previous publication of an abstract during the proceedings of meetings.¹
Duplication by Paraphrasing or "Text-recycling"	When an author writes about his or her own research in two or more articles from different angles or on different aspects of the research without acknowledgment of the original paper.	Yes. Creating several publications from the same research, is considered manipulative. See our separate factsheet on plagiarism/text recycling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Put anything in quotes that is taken directly from a previously published paper, even if you are reusing something in your own words. ■ Make sure to reference the source accordingly.
Translations of a paper published in another language	Submitting a paper to journals in different languages without acknowledgment of the original paper.	Yes. Translated articles are acceptable when all necessary consents have been obtained from the previous publisher of the paper in any other language and from any other person who might own rights in the paper.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ If you want to submit your paper to journal that is published in a different country or a different language, ask the publisher if this is permissible. ■ At the time of submission, disclose any details of related papers in a different language, and any existing translations.

*When in doubt, always consult with your professor, advisor, or someone in a position of authority who can guide you to the right course of action.

References

1. Committee on Publication Ethics Guidelines on Good Publication Practice. Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). 1999. Accessed: June 15, 2012.
2. Elsevier. Publishing Ethics Resource Kit (PERK). Available at: <http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/editorshome.editors/Introduction>. Accessed: June 15, 2012.
3. International Committee of Medical Journal Editors. Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals: Publishing and Editorial Issues Related to Publication in Biomedical Journals: Overlapping Publications. Available at: http://www.icmje.org/publishing_4overlap.html. Accessed: June 8, 2012.