**Research and publishing ethics**

**Authorship, plagiarism and responsibilities**

**What does it mean to be an author?**

An “author” is generally considered to be someone who has made substantive intellectual contributions to a published study.

**Types of authorship**

- **First author:** the person who conducts or supervises the data collection, analysis, presentation and interpretation of the results and also puts together the paper for submission.
- **Co-author:** makes intellectual contributions to the data analysis and contributes to data interpretation, reviews each paper draft, must be present to resolve the results, defend the implications and discuss study limitations.

Avoid ghost authorship: excluding authors who participated in the work.
Avoid scientific writers and gift authors: including authors who did not contribute to the work.

**What happens when there is a dispute?**

- It must be resolved by authors.
- Editors cannot adjudicate or act as a judge.
- It delays publication as the editor has to get agreement from all authors about any changes.
- After publication it can be published as a correction but needs agreement from all authors about any changes.

**What is plagiarism and how is it detected?**

Plagiarism is the appropriation of another person’s ideas, processes, or words without giving appropriate credit, including those obtained through confidential review of others’ research proposals and manuscripts.

Correct citation is key.

**CrossCheck is a huge database of 30+ million articles, from 50,000+ journals, from 400+ publishers.**

- The software alerts editors to any similarities between your article and the huge database of published articles.
- Many Elsevier journals now check every submitted article using CrossCheck.

**Work that can be plagiarised includes...**

- Words (language)
- Ideas
- Findings
- Writings
- Graphic representations

**Conflicts of interest**

Conflicts of interest can take many forms:

- Direct financial: employment, stock ownership, grants, patents
- Indirect financial: honoraria, consultancies, mutual fund ownership, expert testimony
- Career and intellectual: promotion, direct rival institutional
- Personal belief

**The consequences**

Consequences vary depending on the misconduct and the journal, institutions, and funding bodies involved.

Authors could:

- Have letters retracted (carring a note why they were retracted, e.g., for plagiarism)
- Have letters of concern or reprimand written to them
- Institutes and funding bodies could carry out disciplinary action

**Editors’ view: what makes a good reviewer?**

- Provides a thorough and comprehensive report
- Submits the report on time
- Provides well-founded comments for authors
- Gives constructive criticism
- Demonstrates objectivity
- Provides a clear recommendation to the editor

**Your ultimate checklist for reviewing a paper**

- **First impressions**
  - Is the research original, novel and important to the field?
  - Does it include key findings?
  - Is it appropriate length?

- **Abstract**
  - Is it really a summary?
  - Does it include key findings?
  - Is it a complete description?

- **Introduction**
  - Is it clear, well organized?
  - Does it properly introduce and put into perspective what follows?

- **Methodology**
  - Can a colleague reproduce the experiments and get the same results?
  - Did the authors include proper references to previously published methodology?
  - Is the description of new methodology accurate?

- **Conclusion**
  - Could or should the authors have included supplementary material?

- **References, tables and figures**
  - Check accuracy, number and citation appropriateness
  - Comment on any footnotes
  - Comment on tables, their quality and readability
  - Assess completeness of legends, headers and axis labels
  - Check presentation consistency
  - Comment on need for colour in figures

- **Peer review**

  - It improves the quality of the published paper
  - Ensures previous work is acknowledged
  - Determines the importance of findings
  - Detects plagiarism and fraud
  - Plays a central role in academic career development

  - It is a well understood concept
  - Without it there is no control in scientific communication
  - Journal editors evaluate and reject certain articles prior to external peer review

- **Why should you review?**

  - Provides a clear recommendation to the editor
  - Demonstrates objectivity
  - Provides well-founded comments for authors
  - Gives constructive criticism

  - It delays publication as the editor has to get agreement from all authors about any changes.
  - After publication it can be published as a correction but needs agreement from all authors about any changes.

- **Confidential comments will not be disclosed to the author(s)***