The Ethics of Authors in Scientific Publications

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In this editorial, I will refer to an issue that has been commonplace in discussions between editors around the world: the ethical conduct of academics and scientists at the time of publishing their articles and scientific findings. In general, it is to be expected of these actors, the completeness, indispensable condition for the said professional of higher level.

To avoid plagiarism, duplication and publication of non-genuine scientific results, a small group of UK publishers created the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) in 1997. Its main objective was to avoid cases of scientific misconduct.

This committee currently has members all over the world and operates in the most different academic fields, and has observed deviant conduct of what one has as a good scientific practice (COPE, 2000). Among the most serious types of scientific misconduct, COPE cited: "falsification and plagiarism when proposing, doing or evaluating a research, or describing the results of a research."

In these cases, it would be the invention of the data or information and / or the alteration of the results that are observed in an experiment. These can be distorted in a number of ways: from having only your dates updated or published selectively (according to your expectations), to the vilest form, where there is the appropriation of the work of another, without mention being made of the source. In this case, there are already some technological resources that have a system that tests, among other details, the repetition of 7 to 10 continuous words or the sequence of 30 letters / characters from another source. It is very important that any citation is clearly indicated.

Per Vasconcelos et al. (2009), there is still no consensus on what plagiarism is among Brazilian researchers, although it is a very sensitive subject, and has not been widely approached by institutions in Latin America.

There is still scientific misconduct: absence in the work of any of the authors (Steneck, 2007); Not to publish the research, reveal no conflict of interest, do not present complete data of the study type: to present side effects of medicines, for example (Kollias, 2009); Questionable research practices - do not get approval from the Research Ethics Committee, do

not admit that data has been omitted, do not include information on side effects, conduct research on humans who have not been sufficiently informed or enlightened (Kollias, 2009).

Science (2005) itself reflected how it was possible that proven fraudulent work such as those in South Korea's Hwang had access to this important paper, bypassing peer review. In this sense, it is necessary to ask: it would be this scientific environment, and the current process of peer evaluation is still sufficient. Were there other ways to avoid misconduct in these cases? What could induce people to such behavior, even aware that it is reprehensible?

The publication of wrong or arranged results is one of the great problems of editors, who are increasingly seeking to use programs that help detect that they are not faced with plagiarism and / or fraud (Vargas, 2009). Those who embark on scientific misconduct forget that science has its own mechanisms of correction, because any publication, regardless of who the author or authors are, is subject to verification. It may take time, but any plagiarism or scientific fraud, day, will be unmasked.

It is possible that we ourselves are to blame. There is a certain amount of pressure for more and more publications, as they would be linked to research aid. Also, the editors and assessors do not have a due relief in terms of didactic workload, overburdening themselves with several administrative, research, teaching and extension activities at the university, which may imply some difficulty in perceiving possible fraud.

Admittedly, when people decide not to adhere to human values as their guiding principles of life, not much has to be done about it.

About the prevention of possible ethically deviant conduct, there are some proposals in the market. A Nature (Garner and Errami, 2008), where there were seventy thousand potential cases of duplication of work. It was an automatic search with an application known as "Tblast" in more than 7 million abstracts in the biomedical field. This new tool along with newer ones, like the "Plagius", will certainly be of great help to the scientific editors, so that they can find out and adjust the conduct, especially of our young scientists, so that they do not fall into the trap of temptation.

Science is a universal patrimony. His spirit is collective and its construction requires ethics and commitment to truth. But, like any human activity, it is subject to errors. It would never be too much trouble to warn that there are cases where errors are involuntary. And these have nothing to do with scientific misconduct.

Let us continue the great mission of protecting our journals, improving the quality of science in our country. This is how we motivate our young people to participate actively in an increasingly human and ethical culture. In an educational process in which our young researchers learn that, more important than the discovery of the new, is also the respect and solidarity with what already exists.

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