

No compromise to ethical research and publications

An interesting article published in *Journal Publications* (2014) and written by Hill and Pitt of Rutgers New Jersey Medical School, USA, stated that authors have failed to reproduce some of the experimental works in their laboratory, which were earlier published in high impact journals by a group of Chinese authors.^[1] The reasons of such occurrence may be multiple, probably research misconduct or wrong research outcomes but “go ahead” attitude of those Chinese scientists and subsequent publications of their flawed research data were the causes of failure to reproduce the same experimental works by scientists in next line. Whatever it may be, but the message is clear that some scientists are behaving very badly!

It has been noticed that there are several ways medical research too violated its spirit of ethics principle. For example, manipulations of research procedures including changing calibration pattern of instruments, stealing the idea of research, false study designs, false data generations, imaginary ethical consents, image manipulations, and finally, unethical publications. Hence, we can say that the conception of research idea and conduct of research to publication at any stage research ethics may be compromised.^[2] It is obvious that many factors contribute to unethical research practices including publications, namely, peer pressure, serious fund crunch, career prospects, poor research training including supervisions, pressure from fund providers, self-centric attitude, and personal characters.

Recently, Committee on Publication Ethics - a London-based ethical publication watchdog - recommended to employ a “research integrity officer” for every academic and research institutions including Universities.^[3] It is now emphasized that (i) ethical research, (ii) ethical practice, and (iii) ethical publications in combination will reflect true research integrity, and violation of any of these three components will be considered as unethical science or scientific misconduct. Community Orientation Program for Expatriates and International Committee of Medical Journal Editors clearly recommend that publication ethics is the foremost of research domain as anything wrong in it will destroy the trust of the research, especially

the flawed publications will seriously influence future researchers and carry forward completely untrue messages for humanity.^[4,5]

In one of the articles, bioethicist Prof. Graf mentioned that ultimately at the end of the day, it is only “trust” remained for research legacy where professor relies on research scholars, university relies professors, peer reviewer trusts authors, editor trusts peer reviewers, and finally, reader trust authors and their originalities.^[6] Unfortunately, reports on ethical violation in publication shake the confidence of common men, especially in medical sciences research. The role of research institutions or universities is needed to be redefined. The institution must make research integrity compulsory for their academic curriculum and make all the researchers including their mentors accountable for any scientific misconduct including publications. A culture of best research practices including publications may be promoted at all the level in institute or University. The reward and punishment system on conducting research may also be introduced. Research integrity of the researcher and of course their institution will reflect the highest professional standard.

There is no alternative of absolute honesty in conducting research and publish its outcome; hence, honesty cannot be negotiated!

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