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Review Article

**Publish Or Perish__Changing Paradigm And Ethics
What The Academicians Are Doing And Why**

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ABSTRACT

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Academic publications have seen a downslide. A growing emphasis on “Publish or Perish” has given birth to many ethical issues and malpractices. Increased publications improves the chances of getting grants and tenured positions, recruitment and promotions. This has led to an increase in the number of publications with a commensurate increase in the growth of new journals with a supposedly great impact factor. Salami slicing, Plagiarism, duplicate publication and fraud are now rampant, as is the practice of ghost authors and falsifying data. What now needs to be re-established is the Integrity of research. Editorial standards and processes have to be reinforced and rejuvenated at personal and organizational level.

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INTRODUCTION:

There seems little doubt that scientific publications have seen a downslide over the past several years. There is a growing emphasis on "Publish or Perish" and this has given birth to many ethical issues and malpractices in academics. A recent case in point is the plagiarizing of portions of Robbin's Pathology by certain faculty members of private medical college in India. Naturally it has raised a lot of feathers. The emphasis stems from the realization that increased publications improves the chances of getting grants and tenured positions, recruitment and promotions. This in turn has led to mushrooming of

- "Luxury journals" with high impact factor, which is the new Buzz word
- Open Access journals
- Predatory practices

Humanities scholar Camille Paglia has described the publish or perish paradigm as "tyranny" and further writes that "The [academic] profession has become obsessed with quantity rather than quality. One brilliant article should outweigh one mediocre book, just as one or two brilliant lectures in a conference would outweigh a full day of scientific mediocrity" (1)

- ❖ **Increase In The Number Of Publications** - has led to the growth of many new journals. Neither they are appreciated by the peers nor they are of any importance to the industry or patient. Research is essential to carry science forward. That it is important in improving patient care cannot be denied. However, equally important is the fact that the research done benefits patient, physician and community at large.
- ❖ **Salami Slicing** - This is a much-practiced phenomenon where a single research is split into many parts and published as independent endeavors. I have done this myself with my thesis database with papers published in Indian Journal of Surgery and Indian Journal of Orthopaedics
- ❖ **Plagiarism** - Authors do not hesitate to lift portions of some other authors text in a cut, copy and paste method, passing bits off as their own. Recent plagiarism detection software has put the lid on this to a very large extent. Manuscript of my article 'Whither Orthopaedics Today' published

in the Indian Journal of Orthopaedics was returned for plagiarism from my own post on Indian actor, Amir Khan's website "Satyamev Jayate" (2)

- ❖ **Duplicate Publication** - Quite often authors publish the same research in two different journals, one a little less obscure than the other, with false undertakings. This may also be the consequence of sending the same paper to two or three different publishers in an effort to expedite the publication. A senior Orthopaedic Oncologist of the premier cancer Institute of India, Tata Memorial Cancer Hospital, Mumbai faced this issue regarding his own publication in Indian Journal of Orthopaedics
- ❖ **Fraud** - Fraud is defined as fabrication or falsification in performing or reporting research results. No one could forget the famous fraud of Piltdown man. In this forgery, the lower jawbone of an orangutan combined with the skull of a fully modern man was touted as the discovery of the missing link.
- ❖ **Ghost Authors** - In September 2011, David Colquhoun, wrote an article in the Guardian UK, 'Publish-or-perish: Peer review and the corruption of science' (3) 'To have "written" 800 papers is regarded as something to boast about rather than being shameful. University PR departments encourage exaggerated claims, and hard-pressed authors go along with them.'

There is rampant

- Juggling with numbers. Implant manufacturers tell me that they don't sell half as many implants as all the Total Joint Replacement figures professed added up,
- Juggling with title and matter
- Falsified undertakings

To what extent can authors go in order to get published? A recently published article For Sale: "Your Name Here" in a Prestigious Science Journal by Charles Sefie brought to attention some rampant unethical publishing practices, most of which have roots in China. (4)

Repetitious fancied phrases in what is termed as 'Beggars funnel plot', scientific "topics for sale" and

scientific journal "article transfer" agreements to authors who are looking to get published quickly in an international journal are some of the ploys used. You wouldn't believe it but one of my colleagues has the telephone number of an agency for publication in Journals. All one has to do is call. By and large, the problem does not arise from outright fraud, which is rare. It arises from official pressure to publish when you have nothing to say. Recent Medical Council of India regulation have added fuel to the fire. It requires post graduates to publish two papers, or present them at conferences, to qualify for their post graduate degree, precipitating

- Fraud and plagiarism on the part of the student
- Willful deception and connivance on the part of the teacher

A recent article in The New York Times dated 29th December (5) highlights a growing industry around "fake academe" — which consists of

- Booming business for fraudulent scholarly journals and conferences.
- One India-based company promises a 24-hour review and acceptance process completed by "experts," but the NYT investigation found the entire operation a scam to collect publication and conference fees from unsuspecting scholars.
- Jeffrey Beall, a tenured librarian at the University of Colorado Denver, has created a website tracking "predatory open access scholarly publishers" in the field; the list has gone from 18 to 923 in the last five years.

In a climate increasingly focused on student outcomes and support for marginalized students, should teaching and service-oriented tasks be weighted more heavily than academic productivity? Is there really sufficient time for scholars to complete research and publications, or should the "publish or perish" model be re-evaluated?

PROMOTING RESEARCH INTEGRITY

Research misconduct is to be astutely avoided. The most falsified aspect pertains to thesis work and the Guide's role in this. The dispute is in relation to the intellectual property rights and who takes credit. A

case in point is the dispute created in India over the development of the 'Jaipur foot'.

Often the research conducted at one place under one guide is published as being conducted elsewhere under another guide who had nothing to do with the research subject or place, all for the explicit purpose of getting into the new boss' good books or seek his favour. My own post graduate indulged in this when he joined a leading Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences and Research in Northern India after completing his post-graduation under me. Whistle Blowing in such instances would be or at least should be justified, whatever the consequences

FABRICATION, FALSIFICATION AND IMAGE MANIPULATION

This includes

- Copying published papers
- Inflated data
- Selective reporting of data very common in the pharmaceutical industry sponsored research

The opening of new Medical Colleges by the dozen, often in sparsely populated areas, has led to the phenomenon of scant patients and their meagre database. Requirements of the Universities and Medical Council of India on the other hand, forces the students to falsify and inflate data, and indulge in image manipulation. The medical faculty find themselves on the horns of a dilemma whether to go with the rampant fraudulent process or jeopardize their jobs. The manner of the admissions of the students has hung the Management's sword of Damocles over them.

DUPLICATE AND REDUNDANT PUBLICATION

Brand et al (6) wrote in an editorial in the JBJS that approximately 8% articles have an element of redundancy and salami slicing which they refer to as "meat extender" phenomenon

Dr Anil Jain (7), Professor and Head of Orthopaedics, University College of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, India wrote on ethical issues in publication and emphasized on the need for transparency in research

- Who funded the work?
- Who did the work? Something that is to be astutely avoided is gift authorship whatever the compulsion
- Has the work been published before?

EDITORIAL STANDARDS AND PROCESSES

Towards these ends we need to beef up the

- Peer review systems
- Peer review selection

Safeguards in the form of establishment of COPE in 1997 and best practice guidelines on publication ethics as a treatise by Blackwell Publishing in 2007 (8) are efforts in the direction to curtail these malpractices.

The AAOS has established a Code of Medical Ethics and Professionalism for Orthopaedic Surgeons.

It is time some universal steps are taken in this direction (9)

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