Publication Ethics: 
Part 1 - Overview

Charon A. Pierson, PhD, GNP, FAANP
Editor-in-Chief
Journal of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners
and
Nurse Author & Editor

Objectives
- Define ethical conduct related to the conduct of research and dissemination of findings
- Locate specific resources to examine ethical dilemmas in research and publication
- Describe the ripple effect of publication misconduct

Assumptions about the conduct and dissemination of research
- The scientific record is basically true
- Research is conducted in an ethical manner
- Research methodology precludes biasing results
- Data are reported in an unbiased manner
- Authors do not intentionally plagiarize the work of others

- Fabrication – making up data or results and reporting them
- Falsification – manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results with the intent to change the outcome
- Plagiarism – the appropriation of another person’s ideas, processes, results, or words without appropriate credit

Other research misconduct

- failing to report an adverse event with a patient to the sponsor or the Institutional Review Board (IRB);
- deviating from the protocol (e.g., entering an ineligible subject in a trial, or administering an off-protocol drug);
- forging a physician’s signature on medical orders;
- failing to obtain or properly document, informed consent;
- breaching human subject confidentiality; and
- failing to obtain IRB and/or Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval for changes implemented in an approved protocol

Why do we write?

Convey information
Convey our feelings
Express thoughts
Complete an assignment
Maintain an historical record
Make a list
Publish work
Submit grants
Become famous
Organize our thoughts
Remember our thoughts
How do we learn to write?

- We learn to talk
- We learn to read
- We learn to write

Writing private thoughts in your diary does not follow the same rules as writing for school or for public dissemination.

Locating resources

- Author guidelines for specific journals
- International Council of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE)
- World Association of Medical Journal Editors (WAME)
- International Academy of Nurse Editors (INANE)
- Office of Research Integrity (ORI)
- Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)

Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)*

- Formed 1997 in the UK
- Now has nearly 700 members from all over the world
- Members are journal editors of all types
- Large publishers (Wiley-Blackwell, Elsevier, Springer, Taylor & Francis, Palgrave Macmillan, and Wolters Kluwer) have enrolled all their journals as members
- Non-members have access to the guidelines, sample letters, database of cases discussed at the Council
- Members have access to everything on the site including specific advice on how to handle individual cases from the Council
- All material on the COPE site can be freely used for educational purposes

*Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) (http://publicationethics.org)
COPE Code of Conduct*

*Editors should be responsible for everything published in their journals. They should:
• strive to meet the needs of readers and authors;
• constantly improve the journal;
• ensure the quality of the material they publish;
• champion freedom of expression;
• maintain the integrity of the academic record;
• preclude business needs from compromising intellectual standards;
• always be willing to publish corrections, clarifications, retractions and apologies when needed.

*Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), Code of Conduct (http://publicationethics.org)

COPE Guidelines for Editors*

*General duties and responsibilities (partial list):
• Support initiatives designed to reduce academic misconduct
• Support initiatives to educate researchers about publication ethics
• Assess the effects of their journal policies on author and reviewer behaviour and revise policies, as required, to encourage responsible behavior and discourage misconduct

*Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), Best Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors (http://publicationethics.org)

COPE Guidelines for Editors*

*Relations with authors (partial list):
• Provide guidance about criteria for authorship and/or who should be listed as a contributor
• Require all contributors to disclose relevant competing interests and publish corrections if competing interests are revealed after publication
• Be guided by COPE flowcharts in case of suspected misconduct or disputed authorship
• Publish details of how they handle cases of suspected misconduct (with links to the COPE flowcharts)

*Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), Best Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors (http://publicationethics.org)
Summary

- We have a responsibility to maintain the integrity of the scientific record.
- As authors, reviewers, researchers, and editors, we are obligated to report scientific misconduct.
- As educators, we are obligated to teach ethical conduct in regard to research and writing.
- Resources to assist with these obligations are freely available on the Internet.