

EDITORIAL

Counteracting plagiarism

Plagiarism (from the Latin ‘plagiare’, ‘to kidnap’) is ‘the appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one’s original work’ (Harris *et al.*, 2008). Plagiarism is a term that applies to many different types of copying, ranging from claiming authorship of an entire piece of work to misattribution or insufficient attribution of source papers. Interestingly, it is possible to plagiarize not only the work of others but also one’s own work, for example the simultaneous or subsequent submission of similar manuscripts with only minor differences. Occasionally, similar articles may legitimately be published in two journals, because they reach different audiences. However, such practice must be openly approved by the editors of both journals, and the duplication must be acknowledged in each article. The Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) offers guidance for authors, editors, publishers and journalists on a broad spectrum of issues related to publication ethics, including plagiarism (<http://www.publicationethics.org/about>), and *Oral Diseases* endeavours to abide by COPE guidance.

Plagiarism is not a crime *per se* but is disapproved more on the grounds of ethics and moral offence, and cases of plagiarism can involve liability for copyright infringement (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plagiarism>). Plagiarism is a serious breach of research ethics that, if committed intentionally, is considered research misconduct. Thus, an allegation of plagiarism is a serious accusation and must never be made lightly. Hannabuss (2001) highlights the severity of the action if plagiarism is proven against an academic: ‘Codes of academic conduct usually include guidance on plagiarism and the penalties it can lead to – failure of an assignment, suspension from a course, and, in retrospect, possible revocation of an academic award. For academic staff, working under an employment contract between employer and employee, there are added legal and professional sanctions and obligations, such as loss of livelihood and reputation.’

As in all scholarly fields, the questions of academic honesty and plagiarism have been recognized in the dental/oral sciences for some years and there are increasing moves to educate dental students and faculty in the ethics of publishing (Fuller and Killip, 1979; O’Connell, 1989; Odom, 1991; Ozar, 1991; Genco, 1992; Bebeau and Davis, 1996; Teplitsky, 2002; Gupta *et al.*, 2004; Lefebvre and Lang, 2005; Scanlan, 2006; Andrews *et al.*, 2007; Luther, 2008; Sivapathasundharam, 2008; Smith, 2008; Bremner, 2009; Ford *et al.*, 2009; Manogue *et al.*, 2009; Arda, 2011). We at *Oral Diseases*, like those responsible for all serious scientific journals, are keen to prevent plagiarism and have for some time flagged a warning on the website ‘The journal to which you are submitting your manuscript employs a plagiarism detection system. By submitting your manuscript to this journal you accept that your manuscript may

be screened for plagiarism against previously published works.’ (<http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/odi>).

There is a range of tools available to detect plagiarism: *Oral Diseases* and its publisher have now introduced one such tool (CrossRef/Paradigms plagiarism tool Cross-Check/Thenticate: detail at <http://www.ithenticate.com/Portals/92785/docs/crossref-announces-crosscheck-plagiarism-detection-service.pdf>).

This initiative allows us to compare against 28 000 000 published research articles from 120 global scientific, technical and medical publishers. All major publishers are part of a publishers’ association CrossRef (<http://www.ithenticate.com/>). We hope that the above-described developments in publication ethics will enhance further the quality of dental/oral science published and the increasingly high reputation of *Oral Diseases*. We urge all of our readers and authors to become familiar with current, widely accepted publication ethics provided in the included web links and help *Oral Diseases* eliminate all forms of plagiarism from submitted articles.

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