



Alexandria Initiative on Scientific Misconduct: Plagiarism

Meeting Date

Alexandria, September 6, 2007

Participating Parties

The meeting was organised by the Egyptian Society of Surgeons through one of its working groups (Egyptian Group for Surgical Science and Research) and its journal (Egyptian Journal of Surgery) as part of its annual summer meeting in Alexandria. Participants had diverse backgrounds and presented the following bodies:

1. World Health Organization
2. Egyptian Committee for Quality of Medical Journals
3. Medical Research Institute, University of Alexandria
4. Faculty of Medicine, University of Alexandria
5. Faculty of Dentistry, University of Alexandria
6. Faculty of Nursing, University of Alexandria
7. Academic Promotion Committees, Ministry of Higher Education
8. Medical Syndicate
9. Editors of Medical Journals

Meeting Outline

The meeting was attended by 30 participants and was initiated by an overview on scientific misconduct followed by an open discussion. Participants shared their experiences and suggestions to combat scientific misconduct in general with special emphasis on plagiarism. Participants were then split into working groups. The groups discussed the role of universities and medical journals in management of plagiarism and gave their feedback and comments on possible implementation strategies.

Alexandria Initiative on Plagiarism

Institutions

1. Educational and research institutions should adequately train their staff on methods of plagiarism prevention and management.
2. Educational and research institutions should whenever possible have dedicated staff for dealing with plagiarism.
3. Undergraduate and postgraduate higher education programmes should include adequate induction courses on plagiarism for their students.
4. Educational and research institutions should have declared policies and documented procedures on plagiarism that are fair, transparent and consistent.



5. Educational and research institutions should make sure that both staff and students are aware of their policies and procedures on plagiarism especially those of disciplinary nature.
6. Institutional policies and procedures against plagiarism should be an essential component of any internal or external quality assessment process of the institution.
7. Educational and research institutions should maintain their research standards through training courses on research and writing skills.
8. Educational and research institutions should continuously monitor their research conduct as part of their strategy to combat plagiarism.
9. Each educational or research institution should have its own guidance document on plagiarism covering essential topics such definitions and types of plagiarism, strategies and methods for its prevention, methods of citation and paraphrasing, common knowledge, copyrights, etc.
10. Educational and research institutions should make use of the internet facilities freely available to detect plagiarism and make efforts to purchase up-to-date plagiarism detection software.

Medical Journals

11. Medical journals should have declared policies and documented procedures that deal with plagiarism in a fair, transparent and consistent manner.
12. A section on plagiarism should be included in the instructions to authors presenting a clear definition of plagiarism and stating that the journal has policies and procedures on plagiarism and that they will be activated once plagiarism is suspected.
13. Medical journals should have an authorship agreement form signed by the author(s) which contains a section stating that none of the material presented has been partly or wholly copied from other sources.
14. Medical journals should publish educational articles on plagiarism.
15. Medical journals should inform reviewers about the journal's policy on plagiarism and their role combating it.
16. Medical journals should report authors who have plagiarised and who have not given a satisfactory response to the journal to their institutions with supporting evidence of plagiarism.
17. Medical journals should make use of the internet facilities freely available to detect plagiarism and make efforts to purchase up-to-date plagiarism detection software.

Recommended strategies

18. Awareness campaigns on plagiarism should be initiated and maintained.
19. Preventive rather than punitive strategies in dealing with plagiarism should be pursued.
20. Leadership commitment and role modelling should be emphasized in creating an atmosphere of academic integrity.
21. Intellectual learning outcomes and active learning are to be encouraged in educational programmes in order to minimize chances of plagiarism.