Plagiarism in Medical Publications: Practical Solutions for Maintaining Integrity in the Industry

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Abstract

OBJECTIVES: To identify the standard operating procedures to detect and correct plagiarism based on existing practices of high impact medical and scientific journals, professional publications societies, and established periodicals.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS: A comprehensive review of plagiarism policies, protocols, and identification methods used by these organizations reveals the best practices of each. This analysis includes the definitions of plagiarism by the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME), the International Society for Medical Publication Professionals (ISMPP), the American Medical Writers Association (AMWA), the European Medical Writers Association (EMWA), the Association of Etherical Review Committees (AERC), and the individual guidelines of various medical society journals.

RESULTS: The results reveal a framework of best practices for preventing plagiarism in the medical communications industry. Professional organizations, journals, and websites, including the ISMPP, AMWA, EMWA, and scientific journal publishers, various universities, New York City, and the New York Times Company.

CONCLUSIONS: While plagiarism remains a threat to scientific credibility and a serious challenge for media companies, it can be thwarted by employing established guidelines and combining them with the best practices of each. This study reveals a framework of best practices for detecting and preventing plagiarism in the medical communications industry.

Background

Plagiarism is a serious form of scientific misconduct that results from the incorporation of content from another source without appropriate attribution, citation, or permissions. This includes direct (or word-for-word) plagiarism, where exact or almost exact sentences, phrases, and complete thoughts outside of cited references, which appear in the work under review, are from publications, websites, or other resources. The American Medical Writers Association (AMWA) defines plagiarism as "the unauthorized, unacknowledged use of someone else's word or thoughts.

Specifically, the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME) defines plagiarism as "the use of others' published and unpublished work, without attribution, in such a manner as to create the impression that the work is the author's own." The ISMPP defines plagiarism as "the unauthorized, unacknowledged use of another's work, including any part of another's text, table, graph, or visual image, without due attribution or permission.

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The online software systematically aids in a wide range of clinical and scientific documents available through online literature databases, as well as web-based resources. The online software systematically aids in a wide range of clinical and scientific documents available through online literature databases, as well as web-based resources.

Figure 1. Assessment of Review Process from Medical Journals, Publication Societies, and Commercial News Services

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medical Journal</th>
<th>Publication Society</th>
<th>Commercial News Service</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Draft</td>
<td>Second Draft</td>
<td>Review Submission</td>
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Figure 2. Timeline of Standard Operating Procedures on Plagiarism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Define plagiarism and plagiarism policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Develop a multidisciplinary approach to identify potential cases of plagiarism</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Develop a multidisciplinary approach to identify potential cases of plagiarism</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>8</td>
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Employee Education

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Advantages of The Medicine Group’s SOP on Plagiarism

The Medicine Group’s SOP on plagiarism ensures that industry best practices are met before a document can move to the next stage of development. Our team's approach to authentication of manuscript originality minimizes the risk of plagiarism through the development process, and assists authors in maintaining authorship integrity. The online software systematically aids in a wide range of clinical and scientific documents available through online literature databases, as well as web-based resources.

Limitations

Instances of detected plagiarism are subject to further revision by authors and editorial staff. To implement the procedure successfully, all members of the manuscript development team must possess a high level of knowledge and activity in plagiarism prevention and identification policy.

Conclusions

Although several journals utilize plagiarism identification software after each stage of development, not all have implemented or are compliant with software to prevent plagiarism. The online software systematically aids in a wide range of clinical and scientific documents available through online literature databases, as well as web-based resources.

Acknowledgments

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References

3. Table 1. Types of Plagiarism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Plagiarism</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>Direct plagiarism</td>
<td>The unauthorized, unacknowledged use of another's work, including any part of another's text, table, graph, or visual image, without due attribution or permission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plagiarism of ideas</td>
<td>The unauthorized, unacknowledged use of another's work, including any part of another's text, table, graph, or visual image, without due attribution or permission.</td>
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