

Ethical Issues in Scientific Publications; Aims and Perspectives of COPE

By:

Behrooz Astaneh MD

COPE Council Member

Visiting Editor, BMJ

Editor-in-Chief, Iranian Journal of Medical Sciences

Vice President, Iranian Society of Medical Editors

Founder and Head, Medical Journalism Department

Head, EMAME Publication Ethics Subcommittee

A: Misconducts

- Authorship disputes
 - Conflict of interest
- Double submission, redundant publication...

B: Fraud

- Plagiarism
- Data fabrication
- Data falsification

```
graph TD; A((Reasons of ethical misbehavior)) -.- B((Intentional (Pressure to publish))); A -.- C((Lack of Knowledge))
```


Reasons of
ethical
misbehavior

Intentional
(Pressure to publish)

**Lack of
Knowledge**




• Lack of Knowledge




- Many researchers do not know what can be considered as a misconduct



- Many members of editorial boards do not know the exact definition of various misconducts



- Many editors do not know how to tackle the misconducts



Long term
approach to
make
fundamentals

Short term
approach to
gain rapid
response

To tackle the
problem

Short Term Approach

- **Constructed congresses, seminars, workshops should be designed for faculty members, researchers and policy makers**
- **Workshops can cover a gist of what a researcher, an editorial board member, and a policymaker should know about ethical issues**

Long Term Approach

- **Designing a specific academic course covering ethical issues to make them familiar with the various types of ethical misconducts and international guidelines for ethical publishing**
- **In this way articles are published with lower ethical problems**



Academic Training & Ethical Issues

- **Trained researchers have learned the impact of Col, fabricated/falsified data, plagiarism ...and how they should be prevented**
- **They have learned which publication is considered as “Redundant” and how to avoid that**

Conclusion

- Academic Training can at least treat the “lack of knowledge” cause of ethical misbehavior among editors and researchers
- It can change the trend of journal publishing and management
- It can also increase the standards of ethical publishing in journal offices

The Impact of Ethical Misconduct

- Famous Cases of Fraud

Jan Hendrik Schön

Germany, Physics,
semiconductors

Falsified and fabricated data in
numerous publications

In 2001 he published new
articles every 8 days!!

16 affected articles in *Science*
and *Nature* 2000/01 alone

Investigation report in Sept 2002



Doctorate revoked in
2004, Schön appealed
but the state court
approved the decision
in 2011

Jon Sudbø

Norwegian dentist, physician,
researcher, oncologist

Oral cancer, associate professor
in Uni of Oslo

In 2005 published in the Lancet:
Ibuprofen can diminish oral
cancer risk in smokers

900 fictitious subjects, of them
250 had a same birth date.

Commission report June 2006:
15 of his 38 articles were
fraudulent



His dissertation was
also based on fraud

Licence to practice &
doctorate revoked

Woo Suk Hwang

South Korea

Stem cell cloning

Data fabrication and
violation of bioethics laws

Involved 2 major *Science*
papers 2004 and 2005

Investigation report Jan
2006

Charged with fraud and
embezzlement





“Promoting integrity in research publication”

The history of COPE

- Began in 1997 (by three editors; BMJ, Lancet, Gut) as an informal forum for editors in the UK to discuss ethical issues related to research and publication in biomedical journal publishing
- In 2007-08 was established as a limited company and a UK-registered charity
- In 2007-08 membership increased from ~350 editors to ~3500 (as publishers started to sign up their journals)

Today ...

- COPE currently has about 7000 members and is international in its reach and membership
- All academic disciplines are covered
- 18 Council members from 11 countries
- All academic disciplines and fields are now covered, for example:
 - Biomedicine
 - Pure and applied sciences
 - Engineering and technology
 - Arts, humanities and social sciences

Today ...

- **International Advisory Board**

- As local point of contact to advise and assist COPE in its work to support editors and publishers of peer-reviewed journals in all aspects of publication ethics.
- 14 members from various countries including Russia

COPE

- COPE provides advice and resources to editors and publishers on all aspects of publication ethics
- Work is guided by an elected Council
- Council members are trustees of COPE as a charity and also directors as COPE is a limited company
- Day-to-day management of COPE's business affairs is the responsibility of the permanent staff (Operations Manager, Natalie Ridgeway, and Administrator, Linda Gough)
- Specific projects are managed by various committees

Promoting integrity in research publication

COPE is a forum for editors and publishers of peer reviewed journals to discuss all aspects of publication ethics. It also advises editors on how to handle cases of research and publication misconduct. [Read more about COPE...](#)

Join here

What are the benefits of COPE membership?

FEATURED

FORUM DISCUSSION TOPIC: Sharing of information among editors-in-chief regarding possible misconduct

The Forum discussion topic on Wednesday 4 September is "Sharing of information among editors-in-chief regarding possible misconduct". Click below to learn more and leave your comments.

Learn more

NEWS & OPINION view all ▶

News / COPE's eLearning course relaunched

27/8/2013 7.50am

COPE is delighted to announce the relaunch of the eLearning programme on the COPE website. COPE members can now access the programme directly on the COPE website <http://publicationethics.org/resources/elearning> once they have logged in.

News / Clarification of COPE advice to editors on Geopolitical intrusions on editorial decisions

1/8/2013 6.11am

There has been much discussion recently on government, specifically US government, sanctions against Iran, the potential effect on Iranian researchers and some publishers have cautioned editors and reviewers about handling papers from Iran.

COPE in action: guidance documents

COPE has produced **guidelines**:

- Code of Conduct and Best Practice Guide for Journal Editors
- Code of Conduct for Journal Publishers
- Guidelines for Retracting Articles
- Guidelines for the Board of Directors of Learned Society Journals

COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers

*Irene Hames on behalf of COPE Council
March 2013, v.1*

Peer review in all its forms plays an important role in ensuring the integrity of the scholarly record. The process depends to a large extent on trust, and requires that everyone involved behaves responsibly and ethically. Peer reviewers play a central and critical part in the peer-review process, but too often come to the role without any guidance and may be unaware of their ethical obligations. The COPE Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers set out the basic principles and standards to which all peer reviewers should adhere during the peer-review process. It is hoped they will provide helpful guidance to researchers, be a reference for journals and editors in guiding their reviewers, and act as an educational resource for institutions in training their students and researchers.

Basic principles to which peer reviewers should adhere

Peer reviewers should:

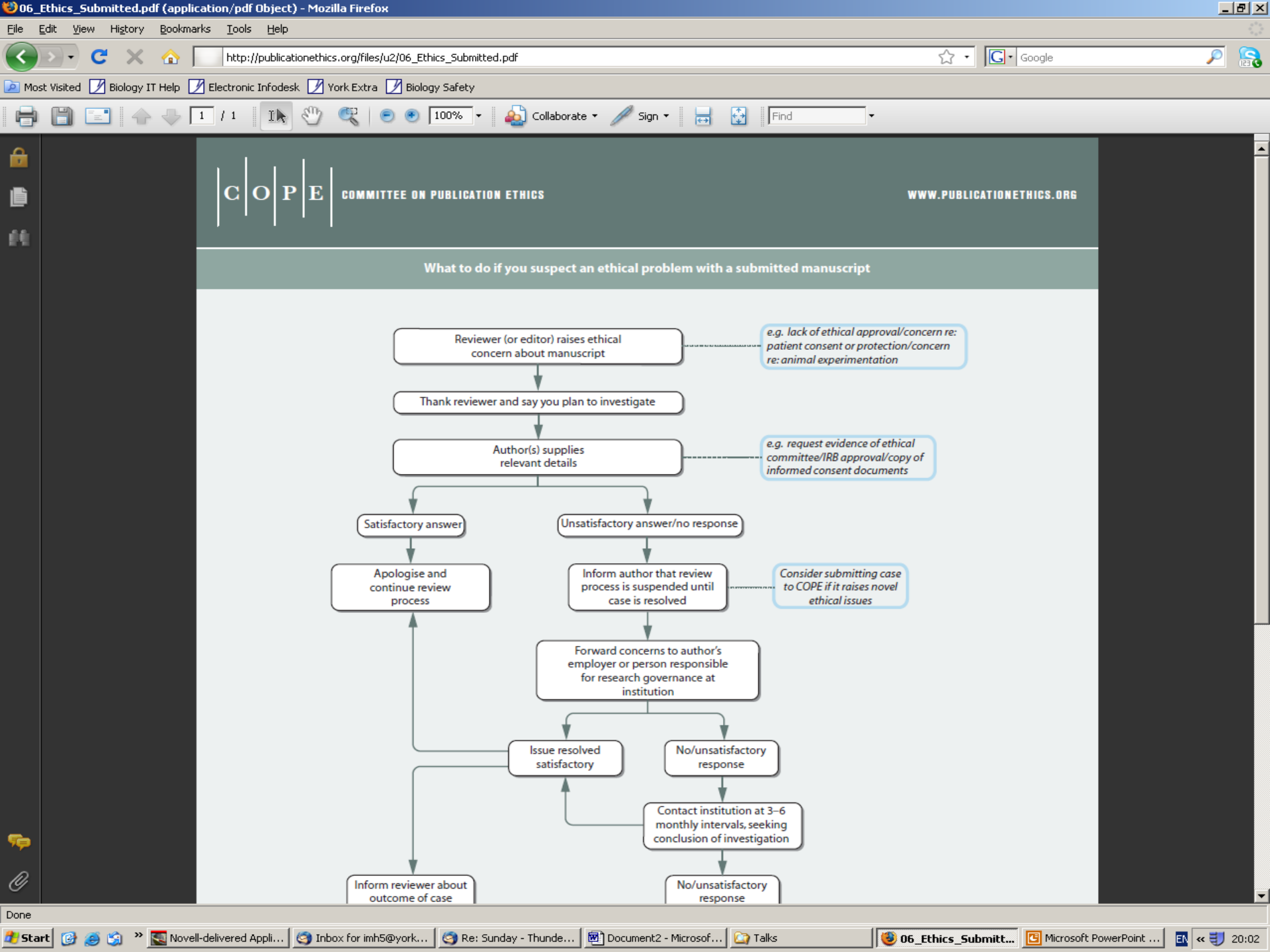
- only agree to review manuscripts for which they have the subject expertise required to carry out a proper assessment and which they can assess in a timely manner
- respect the confidentiality of peer review and not reveal any details of a manuscript or its review, during or after the peer-review process, beyond those that are released by the journal

• ‘COPE’s new Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers: background, issues, and evolution’, ISMTE, EON May 2013, Vol6, issue4, http://www.ismte.org/Shared_Articles-COPes_new_Ethical_Guidelines_for_Peer_Reviewers_background_issues_and_evolution/

COPE in action: guidance documents

- Guidance for Editors on Research, Audit and Service Evaluations
- Sample letters for handling common problems
- A series of flowcharts (also available translated into Italian, Spanish, Chinese, Croatian, Japanese, Persian (Farsi) and Turkish – more planned)

All available at <http://www.publicationethics.org>



The flowcharts cover

- Redundant (duplicate) publication
- Plagiarism
- Fabricated data
- Changes in authorship
- Ghost, guest or gift authorship
- Conflicts of interest
- General suspected ethical concerns
- Reviewer misconduct
- How COPE deals with complaints

COPE in action: advice and guidance to members

COPE offers advice and guidance to its members, primarily through its quarterly **Forum meetings**:

- held in London but members worldwide can take part via telephone-conference
- allow members to benefit from the views and experiences of other members
- case summaries on the website (database of > 400 cases, searchable by year and keywords, some now recorded)

http://publicationethics.org/cases

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Search Ask VIDEO CHAT Listen to music a YouTube 75° Ankara, Turkey CNN

★ Favorites ★ Suggested Sites Web Slice Gallery

(2 unread) - astanehb - Ya... بانکداری اینترنتی بانک ملت International Advisory Gro... Cases | Committee on ...

Sign in



Home About COPE Resources **Cases** Become a member Members Events News & Opinion Contact Us

Submit a Case

Home /

Cases

All the cases COPE has discussed since its inception in 1997 have been entered into a searchable database. This database now contains over 400 cases together with the advice given by COPE. For more recent cases, the database also includes follow-up information about outcome. We hope this database will provide a valuable resource for editors and those researching publication ethics.

You can search by keyword using either the search field top left or by filtering your inquiry using the years and keywords listed in the word cloud below.

We encourage members to look at the database before submitting a case to the Forum to see if similar cases have already been discussed and to see the format used for presenting cases. However, please note that advice from the COPE Forum meetings is specific to the particular case under consideration and may not necessarily be applicable to similar cases either past or future.

RECENT CASES

Authorship dispute

Retraction update?

Unusually frequent submission of articles by a single author

New claim to authorship of published paper

Ethical obligation to find reviewers



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

COPE in action: **Advice and guidance**

-
- COPE does not adjudicate on the merits of individual cases (eg whether publication misconduct has occurred) but simply on whether the COPE member followed appropriate procedures

COPE in action: **Advice and guidance**

- COPE does **not** judge on authorship disputes or editorial decisions such as acceptance or rejection of papers or choice of reviewers.
- COPE has an Ombudsman to arbitrate on cases where a complainant is unhappy with COPE's response
- COPE can only offer advice if the journal is a member of COPE

COPE: other services

- Website is the primary resource for editors
- Ethics Audit (members only)
- Annual seminar (European, North American)
- Research Grants
- Newsletter (quarterly to monthly)

COPE: other services

- eLearning programme:

To Improve the editors' abilities to deal with publication misconducts

To give editors a deeper understanding of publication ethics and practical guidance on how to detect, prevent, and handle misconduct

COPE: other services

- eLearning programme:
- Introduction to publication ethics (free)
- Data fabrication
- Data falsification
- Conflict of interest
- Authorship



Sign in

What are you looking for

- Home
- About COPE
- Resources
- Cases
- Become a member
- Members
- Events
- News & Opinion
- Contact Us

Home / Introduction to Publication Ethics /

Introduction to Publication Ethics

Publication ethics and misconduct

- Back to E-Learning
- or
- Finish module

This section provides an overview of what publication misconduct is

Definitions

The US Office of Research Integrity defines misconduct quite narrowly as:
"...fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing or reviewing research, or in reporting research results"

Source: http://ori.hhs.gov/misconduct/definition_misconduct.shtml

Others have used broader definitions, for example Nylenna & Simonsen wrote:
"Scientific misconduct...is a continuum ranging from honest errors to outright fraud...The research community must take a collective responsibility even for its deviants...Moving the whole research community in the right direction should reduce the number of serious

- Introduction to Publication Ethics
- Publication ethics and misconduct
- Why should you be concerned?
- What to do if you suspect it
- Resources and further reading
- Evaluation form

Resources

COPE resource development

- eLearning modules in development:
- Editor misconduct
- Reviewer misconduct
- Redundant publication
- Selective reporting
- Unethical research

COPE resource development

- Discussion documents in preparation:
- Corrections (expanding on Retraction Guidelines)
- Authorship
- and Text recycling
- New and enhanced Flowcharts planned

COPE: other services

- Regional seminars: Shiraz seminar (in Iran) in Dec/2011 in collaboration with ISME,
- Brazil seminar
- Russia???

COPE contact details

- **Registered office:**

22 Nelson Close

Harleston

Norfolk

IP20 9HL

England

Telephone: 44 (0) 1379 854181

- **Comments/queries**

Linda Gough

cope_administrator@publicationethics.org

- **Website:**

www.publicationethics.org