

Plagiarism

At the *Journal of Medicinal Chemistry*, the annual number of suspected plagiarism cases is very low, which we credit in part to the thorough reviews of our Associate Editors and reviewers but most especially to the self-vigilance of our authors. We are pleased that our authors remain upstanding scientists and are being careful to avoid such egregious errors.

As Editors of the *Journal of Medicinal Chemistry*, we wish to provide our readers, authors, and reviewers with some guidance. Plagiarism is defined as the “wrongful appropriation or purloining and publication as one’s own, of the ideas, or the expression of the ideas ... of another”.¹ Many instances of plagiarism are committed because of authors’ unfamiliarity regarding what constitutes plagiarism. It is on this topic we wish to provide additional information, specifically on self-plagiarism.

The *Journal of Medicinal Chemistry* publishes original research; therefore, authors should not include lengthy discussions of their prior work. Authors should include only as much material as necessary to make the reported work clear and understandable.

- (1) Wherever possible, new language should be used to present material rather than copying from previous publications.
- (2) Partial or whole sentences taken from a prior publication should be placed in quotes and the reference given. This does not mean that large amounts of information should be repeated from other publications.
- (3) It is acceptable to reuse figures as long as permission and acknowledgment has been received from the copyright owner. If the American Chemical Society is the sole owner, permission is not needed to publish in an ACS journal as long as credit is given to where the figure originally appeared in the ACS journal. If credit is given to another source in the figure caption, permission must be obtained from that source.
- (4) As it is difficult to create unique ways to describe procedures and equipment, it is acceptable to reproduce language for these items in the experimental section.
- (5) If you are in doubt as to whether or not material would be considered self-plagiarism, it is best to reword the text.

Because of the serious nature of the plagiarism, we continue to take all suspected cases very seriously. Allegations of plagiarism are thoroughly investigated according to established best practices (<http://publicationethics.org/resources/guidelines>). When we have reasonable concern, we ask authors to respond. If a satisfactory response is not forthcoming and there is adequate evidence to establish that self-plagiarism or plagiarism has occurred, we proceed per definitions and guidelines stated in The Ethical Guidelines to Publication of Chemical Research, American Chemical Society.² For the sake of convenience, the relevant section is reproduced below:

“Plagiarism is not acceptable in ACS journals. ACS journals adhere to the U.S. National Science Foundation definition of plagiarism as “the appropriation of another person’s ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit”

(45 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 689.1). Authors should not engage in plagiarism—verbatim or near-verbatim copying, or very close paraphrasing, of text or results from another’s work. Authors should not engage in self-plagiarism (also known as duplicate publication)—unacceptably close replication of the author’s own previously published text results without acknowledgment of the source. ACS applies a “reasonable person” standard when deciding whether a submission constitutes self-plagiarism/duplicate publication. If one or two identical sentences previously published by an author appear in a subsequent work by the same author, this is unlikely to be regarded as duplicate publication. Material quoted verbatim from the author’s previously published work must be placed in quotation marks. In contrast, it is unacceptable for an author to include significant verbatim or near-verbatim portions of his/her own work, or to depict his/her previously published results or methodology as new, without acknowledging the source. (Modeled with permission from Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics: Authorial Integrity in Scientific Publication <http://www.siam.org/books/plagiarism.php>³)”

If an author plagiarizes material from another author or commits self-plagiarism, this may result in sanctions such as retraction of the article and a ban on future publications from the author. In addition, it is our duty to inform the scientific community at large, including the author’s work place, about the case and the decision reached. Plagiarism can have a negative impact on the scientific careers of authors who plagiarize.

For more information, please visit The Office of Research Integrity’s Web site at <http://ori.hhs.gov/>.

Gunda I. Georg

Shaomeng Wang, Editors

REFERENCES

- (1) *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed.; Oxford University Press, Oxford, U.K., 1989.
- (2) *Ethical Guidelines to Publication of Chemical Research*; American Chemical Society: Washington, DC, 2012; <http://pubs.acs.org/userimages/ContentEditor/1218054468605/ethics.pdf>.
- (3) *Authorial Integrity in Scientific Publication*; Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics: Philadelphia, PA, 2012; <http://www.siam.org/books/plagiarism.php>.

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