Short Communication

Plagiarism: A Trojan in Medical Research Writing

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Abstract: Plagiarism is basically citing another author's language or taking up their ideas and representing them as one's own original work. There are 5 types of plagiarism: copy and paste plagiarism, word switch plagiarism, style plagiarism, metaphor plagiarism, and idea plagiarism. Plagiarists are the literary pirates involved in such activities. Different types of Plagiarists have been identified according to their mode of exploit. Plagiarism is a world-wide problem and actions taken to prevent it have been intensifying after realising the impact of digitalised text, of the Internet, global communications and increasingly efficient search engines. Copyright laws protect writer's words as their legal property. To avoid the charge of plagiarism, writers take care to credit those from whom they borrow and quote.
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INTRODUCTION

In today's highly competitive and advanced world, lot of research is going on in numerous fields. We come across the conclusions of these researches in the various journals. Based on which we upgrade our knowledge on particular topic. But along with advances in science, in recent decades plagiarism has crept up to dilute the worth of research papers.

Plagiarism is "the use of another writer's words or ideas without acknowledging the source" and is "a kin to theft," according to the Harbrace College Handbook. In Writing with Sources, plagiarism means "passing off a source's information, ideas, or words as your own by omitting to cite them—an act of lying, cheating, and stealing" [1].

According to the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME) strict definition, plagia- rism is when six consecutive words are copied, 7 to 11 words are overlapping set of 30 letters [2].

Here is an ideal example of plagiarism - Original Source Material: Steinbrook, R. (2008). Medical student debt - Is there a limit? The New England Journal of Medicine, 359, 2629-2632.

"There are no easy solutions to the problem of medical student debt. Until the economy improves, schools, states, and the federal government are unlikely to be able to provide the substantial additional resources that are required to make a measurable difference in the upward spiral of indebtedness. Among the changes that could help are keeping tuition increases at or below the rate of increase in the CPI; providing a majority of financial assistance in the form of scholarships or grants; expanding loan-repayment programs to assist a wider variety of graduates, such as those who become primary care physicians; and revitalizing and expanding the National Health Service Corps. At a minimum, students need counseling about financial aid and debt management that will help them to make wise decisions and minimize the long-term impact of their medical school loans"[3].

Student Version: Plagiarism

"Until schools and government provide more resources to our medical students, the following might be some solutions for the problem of extensive medical student debt: (a) tuition should stay at or below those of the CPI; (b) scholarships or grants need to be expanded; (c) more types of graduates should have access to loan-repayment programs (e.g., hose who enter family medicine. In any event, students should be advised on how to manage their financial aid and debts so they can make good decisions regarding the future impact that loans may have for them."

Although this student uses few direct borrowings from the original source, he/she has taken its ideas without acknowledging the source. All the student has to do is acknowledge the source either in the

text itself (e.g., As Steinbrook (2008) suggests) or in a footnote or parenthetical citation at the end [4].

The credit should be given to the source in the following examples:

- Any part of a text directly quotes in paper.
- Any part of a text paraphrased.
- Any part of a text summarized.
- Any figures, tables or flowcharts
- Any person's original thoughts, opinions, or ideas.
- Any facts, statistics, graphs or information that is not 'common knowledge.'

One of the most often misused elements of writing a research paper is in the improper presentation of paraphrased material. To paraphrase is to completely recast the content of a source in your own words, keeping the same tone and general length of the original. Even when you paraphrase, you must include a citation [5].

Plagiarism of words can be divided into: (a) the direct form - completely or partially copying of text, computer files, audio or video recordings without acknowledging primary source; (b) mosaic form borrowing ideas and opinions from the original source, few words and phrases without citing this source; (c) self-plagiarism –copying one's own part of text for other pice of work [2].

Plagiarists may be identified as one of the following three types:

- The lazy plagiarist;
- The cunning plagiarist;
- The accidental plagiarist.

The 'lazy' plagiarist is generally an academically weak and otherwise under-motivated student, the type who would happily take the work of someone else in its entirety, do little more than to change the name on the paper and claim it for their own. This type of student may use the 'cheat sites' or simply steal the work of others – maybe that belonging to a student who studied the subject in a previous year. The development of an educated opinion, a lively inquiring mind, a creative impulse: these things are not worthy of consideration. As this author once read in a student's e-mail signature: 'Clay's Conclusion: Creativity is great, but plagiarism is faster'.

The 'cunning' plagiarist is more sophisticated than the lazy plagiarist and takes full advantage of these abundant opportunities: they are quite clear about what plagiarism is, but work hard to avoid detection. Content is cut and- paste from a variety of sources on the Web (and possibly from other students' papers), with a view to manufacturing an answer. They may also attempt to

cover their tracks through the provision of incomplete or inaccurate bibliographic details in their list of references, which make it more difficult to track their misdemeanours.

The 'accidental' plagiarist, by contrast, is not in the least bit devious. Their transgressions arise typically as a consequence of inexperience, poor study skills, local academic norms or some combination thereof. Such students typically insert slabs of unattributed text in their essays and, when challenged, will be either embarrassed by their sloppy referencing or genuinely surprised that they have been challenged at all, claiming ignorance of the system [6].

DETECTION OF PLAGIARISM

Manual plagiarism detection within a single text is based on identifying inconsistencies such as the author's writing style, or recognising passages with a familiar feel to them. Between multiple texts, plagiarism detection involves finding similarities which are more than just coincidence and more likely to be the result of copying or collaboration between multiple authors. Sometimes the lack of fluency in the text and grammatical mistakes are also an indication towards plagiarism.

The second is to then find possible source texts using tools such as web search engines for unknown on-line sources, or manually finding non-digital material for known sources.

The third is automatic plagiarism detection which generally involves finding quantifiable discriminators which can be used to measure the similarity between texts. Rather than identify more complex plagiarism, the automatic methods aim to highlight potentially derived texts through "unusual" or unlikely similarity enabling further manual inspection where more complex forms can be found [7].

GUIDELINES FOR AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

The most effective and foremost way to avoid this Trojan is to avoid any hint of dishonesty by maintaining good research habits and paying attention to a few basic rules of writing and documentation. Some of the guidelines which help in preventing plagiarism are -

- Every time you print out material from the Internet, always make sure that you get the full source so that you can cite it later. If you use note cards when you read books and journal articles, take the time to list the full source including page numbers on the passages that you copy.
- Whenever you cut and paste from the Internet into a document that you are creating, highlight it in another color so that it sticks out. Later, when you are polishing your draft, you can decide if you have too many direct quotations

and can view the sections you have highlighted to see if some can be paraphrased.

- Don't assume that there is some magical number of words or sentences that you can "borrow" without being caught or accused of plagiarism. Sometimes it is not the length of a passage but a clever phrasing that sticks out and gets imbedded in one's memory.

- Don't misrepresent, pretend, or purport that ideas are yours when they aren't.

- Don't copy material, say, three paragraphs, from an original source and indicate at the end of the third paragraph with a footnote that the material was borrowed. The reader must know at the beginning of the first sentence of the first paragraph that you are not the author of the next three paragraphs.

- If you use material verbatim (the exact words), then use quotation marks and cite the source [8].

It should be understood that there are no shortcuts for success and it's better to harness knowledge and skills rather than covering up with plagiarism. There is a constant need for establishing of units for monitoring research work for plagiarism in the institutions and research organizations. Science should not be let off from disclosures and sanctions due to plagiarism.

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