



EDITORIAL

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Research integrity has been a point of interest and concern in the last two decades due to the large number of cases of scientific misconduct, plagiarism, and falsification, among other ethically reprehensible behavior or practices. However, these behaviors are not only reprehensible from an ethical point of view, they are also obstacles for the development of scientific and technological knowledge, since they cause confusion among scientists and hinder the progress of science.

Research integrity must be a collaborative effort between researchers, institutions, publishers, editors and all other participants in research and scientific publishing. In order to facilitate this cooperation the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) was established in 1997. It has over 9000 members worldwide from all academic fields. Membership is open to editors of academic journals and others interested in publication ethics. COPE provides advice to editors and publishers on all aspects of publication ethics and, in particular how to handle cases of research and publication misconduct. It also provides a forum for its members to discuss individual cases. All COPE members are expected to follow the Code of Conduct for Journal Editors. COPE has produced an eLearning course for new editors, the course currently includes: An Introduction to Publication Ethics, Plagiarism, and Authorship among others. COPE also funds research on publication ethics, organizes annual seminars globally and has created an audit tool for members to measure compliance with its Code of Conduct and Best Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors¹.

As our Ethics Statement asserts Research integrity is an essential aspect for the *Journal of Oral Research*. In order to achieve this aspect, a code of conduct must be respected by all actors involved in the editorial process of the journal: authors, reviewers, the publisher and

Research integrity. *Journal of Oral Research* is now a member of COPE.

the Editor². To move forward and improve the quality of our processes, our Journal applied for membership in COPE earlier this year, and from August 3rd we are officially members of the Committee on Publication Ethics³. The *Journal of Oral Research* constantly aims to have the highest standards of quality similar to those of high-level journals in the field of dentistry. Another important point to mention is that only three Chilean journals are currently members of COPE, *Journal of Oral Research* is the only one in the dental field.

Coincidentally, with our entry into COPE, some weeks ago our team detected a case of plagiarism in two manuscripts from the same authors, which were under peer-review. The use of COPE Guidelines allowed us to deal with this situation in an orderly, transparent and professional manner; in conformity with the highest standards of ethics in research and publication. Unfortunately, both manuscripts were eventually rejected. As we pointed out to the authors, we believe that such situations are disappointing, since they are inherently contrary to the principles of science and damage its progress. Our journal will continue with efforts to ensure quality, transparency and integrity of the work in order to respect these scientific principles.

Beyond the consequences of the case, this experience helps to reinforce our belief that research integrity is the product of a joint effort of all participants. Despite the efforts that our editorial team has made, is making and will continue making in the future, it only takes the misconduct of one person to render all these efforts useless. In view of the above considerations, we reiterate our call upon authors and reviewers to make every attempt to protect research integrity. It is also important to emphasize that this concern should not only be in the actions, but also in the omissions that may occur throughout the research process.



Finally, it is important to clarify that, despite the efforts of all participants, there may be inadvertent oversights, which may lead to suspicion of scientific misconduct. In these cases, solutions are relatively simple and usually only involve making the necessary corrections. Anyone can make mistakes, but we must

remember that in these cases virtually everything can be solved with cooperation, transparency and honesty.

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Journal of Oral Research.

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