

## Publication Ethics: Standards and Collaboration as an Answer

To the Editor:

Dr. Ron Amedee's editorial on publication ethics is very interesting.<sup>1</sup> There is no doubt that publication ethics are very important and the classic requirement in medical journalism. However, the interesting issue is that misconduct exists—especially plagiarism misconduct—despite the wide attention given to publication ethics. The main question is, “How do we push publication ethics from concept into real practice?”

While publication misconduct is an international topic at present, the standards by which problems are detected and managed are different and can cause additional problems.<sup>2</sup> Journal editors have different approaches to plagiarism and sometimes may judge the same problem differently. For example, in a case of verbatim copying, one journal editor may not consider the copying as plagiarism but instead consider it to be a good example. Similarly, journal editors react to plagiarism problems in different ways. Some journal editors might only notify the authors' institution, while other editors might also publish a retraction notice.<sup>3</sup>

It seems that single standards are required that apply in any setting for any case and for everyone. However, publications ethics cannot be totally addressed by single

standards enforced by journal editors. The author, reviewer, reader, and institute also have to play a role. Sometimes, the institutes of authors reported for misconduct do not take any action. Therefore, collaboration is also a key determinant for success in eliminating publication misconduct.

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