



Committee on Publication Ethics



Publication ethics: what are editors concerned about? **How do they 'cope'?**

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www.publicationethics.org.uk

Organizations concerned about publication ethics

COPE: Committee on Publication Ethics

CSE: Council of Science Editors

ICMJE: International Committee of Medical
Journal Editors (Vancouver Group)

WAME: World Association of Medical Editors



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Relevant guidelines

- **COPE**: Code of Conduct, Best Practice, Flow charts
- **CSE**: Policy statements, White papers
- **ICMJE**: Uniform Requirements
- **WAME**: Policy statements, Recommendations on publicn ethics



Useful websites

- **COPE:** www.publicationethics.org.uk
- **CSE:** www.councilscienceeditors.org
- **ICMJE:** www.icmje.org
- **WAME:** www.wame.org



Other guidelines

- **Good Publication Practice for pharmaceutical companies (GPP)**
www.gpp-guidelines.org
- **Principles on conduct of clin trials and communication of clin trial results (PhRMA)**
www.phrma.org
- **European/American Medical Writers Association guidelines (EMWA, AMWA)**
www.emwa.org www.amwa.org
- **Declaration of Helsinki (WMA)**
<http://www.wma.net/e/policy/b3.htm>



What keeps editors awake at night?

- Duplicate submissions
- Redundant publications
- Undeclared conflicts of interest
- Authorship problems
- Selective publication
- Plagiarism, fabrication, falsification
- Reviewer misconduct



WAME policy statement

- Ghost authorship exists when someone has made substantial contributions to writing a manuscript and this role is not mentioned in the manuscript itself.

WAME considers ghost authorship dishonest and unacceptable.



but WAME goes on to say

- To prevent some instances of ghost authorship, editors should make clear in their journal's information for authors that **medical writers can be legitimate contributors** and that **their roles and affiliations should be described in the manuscript.**



According to WAME, when editors detect ghost written MSs they may:

- publish a notice that a manuscript has been ghost written, along with the names of the responsible companies and the submitting author
- alert the authors' academic institutions, identifying the commercial companies
- provide specific names if contacted by the popular media or government organizations
- share their experiences on the WAME Listserve and within other forums



Jnl Gen Int Med

- It is also important that every person who contributed to the writing of a manuscript be listed as an author. **Anyone, including freelance writers and writers from communication and education companies, who contributes to reviewing the literature or drafting a manuscript must be listed as an author and complete a conflict of interest statement.**



***JGIM* contd**

- Alternatively, such persons can be listed in the Acknowledgments, including the conflict of interest information. Commissioning of manuscripts by for-profit companies is allowed, but persons contributing to the content of the manuscript must be listed as authors or be acknowledged, and the precise financial relationships, direct and indirect, between the parties involved must be explicitly described. **Failing to do this will result in rejection of the manuscript.**



Keeping editors happy

- **Never submit to >1 journal at the same time**
- **Be transparent about linked papers – supply copies when submitting**
- **Register all trials and include study identifier in all publications**
- **Submit protocol for review**
- **Publish all findings (not just +ve)**
- **Follow authorship guidelines (no guests or ghosts)**
- **Transparency**



Company publication strategies are important

- **Policy on trial registration**
- **Policy to publish results of ALL trials**
- **Policy to avoid redundant publications (salami slicing)**
- **Policy on funding disclosure**
- **Fair authorship policies**
- **Default wording to acknowledge writers**



What do editors do if they suspect misconduct?


Committee on Publication Ethics -- Flowcharts . COPE - Microsoft Internet Explorer

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Committee on Publication Ethics -- Flowcharts

The COPE flowcharts have been written and designed as a practical step-by-step guide for journal editors to deal with the most common breaches of publication ethics that crop up repeatedly in scientific and biomedical journals before and after publication.

The 14 flowcharts have been informed by the hundreds of cases from around the world on which COPE has advised since its foundation in 1997. These breaches range from duplicate (redundant) publication through to copying other researchers' work (plagiarism) to out and out fraud.

[Download flowcharts \(PDF 399 kB\)](#)

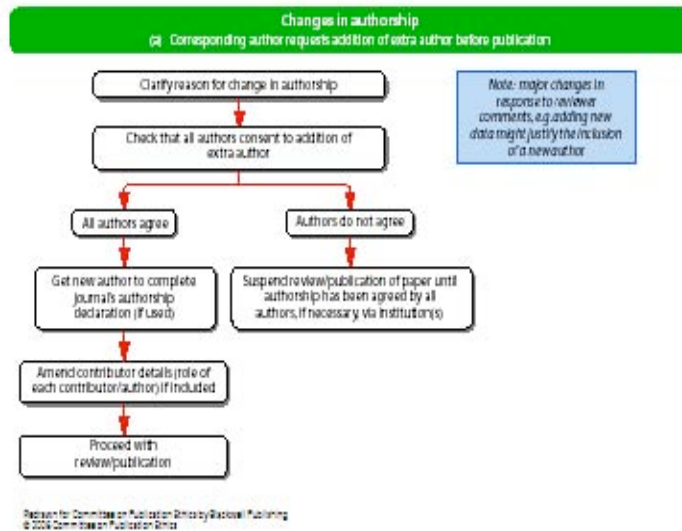
Dates of future COPE meetings

2007

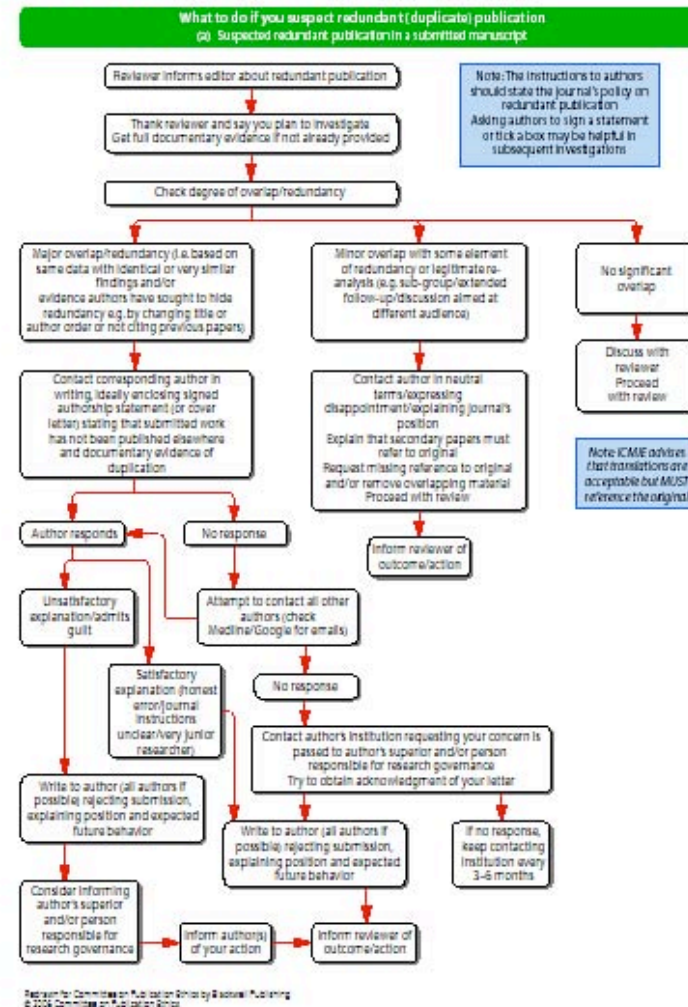
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COPE flowcharts



Flowchart 2a from Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).



COPE cases


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Cases

Click on one of the categories below for a list of case studies and advice from COPE on how to resp

Authors	Miscellaneous
1. Anonymous publication	1. Bribery
2. Author dispute	2. Cheating
3. Author misconduct	3. Commercial organ transplantation
4. Author mistake	4. Differing international standards
5. Author withdrawal	5. Forgery
6. Author's responsibility	6. Grant applications
7. Authorship	7. Legal advice
8. Competing interests	8. Legal rights
9. Complaints procedure	9. Medical school
10. Contributorship	10. Non-medically qualified researchers
11. False credentials	11. Overseas authors

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COPE: background

- **Founded 1997**
- **by editors from *BMJ, Lancet, Gut***
- **Now has ~300 members**
- **Journals and publishers**
- **Quarterly forum meetings discuss anonymised cases**
- **Website, flowcharts, etc.**



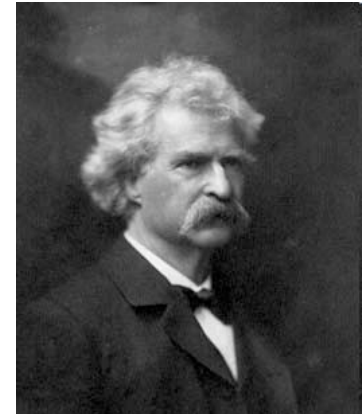
Pharma companies and agencies need:

- **Written publication policy** (regularly updated, consistent with guidelines)
- **Train staff** – ensure awareness of guidelines, understanding of policy
- **Communicate policy with everybody involved** (agency / authors / writers)



***'Always do right –
this will gratify some
and astonish the rest'***

Mark Twain



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