



Committee on Publication Ethics

**Dual Use:
Editorial Freedom &
How Editors Will COPE**

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*The Advancement of Science and the Dilemma of Dual Use
Why We Can't Afford to Fail
November 9–10, 2007, Warsaw*

www.publicationethics.org.uk



The Brief

- Should scientific journals adopt any policies to address the problem of dual use and to prevent malevolent use of published data?
- What is the role of the editors, editorial board, and referees?
- Should the freedom of publication be restricted?

To answer these questions, we need to start at the beginning of scientific publication...



The First Scientific Journal (in English)

PHILOSOPHICAL
TRANSACTIONS:
GIVING SOME
ACCOMPT
OF THE PRESENT
Undertakings, Studies, and Labours
OF THE
INGENIOUS
IN MANY
CONSIDERABLE PARTS
OF THE
WORLD

Vol. I.

For *Anno* 1665, and 1666.

In the *SAVOY*,
Printed by *T. N.* for *John Martyn* at the Bell, a little with-
out *Temple-Bar*, and *James Allestry* in *Dock-Lane*,
Printers to the *Royal Society*.



Philosophical Transactions

- First published 6th May 1665
- Edited by Henry Oldenburg, Secretary of the Royal Society
- Preceded five months earlier by *Journal des sçavants*
- Continues to be published today
- Principle of science established in motto of the Society
- '*Nullius in Verba*' ('On the words of no one')



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(1)

Numb. 1.

PHILOSOPHICAL TRANSACTIONS.

Munday, March 6. 1664.

The Introduction.

WHereas there is nothing more necessary for promoting the improvement of Philosophical Matters, than the communicating to such, as apply their Studies and Endeavours that way, such things as are discovered or put in practise by others: it is therefore thought fit to employ the *Press*, as the most proper way to gratifie those, whose engagement in such Studies, and delight in the advancement of Learning and profitable Discoveries, doth entitle them to the knowledge of what this Kingdom, or other parts of the World, do, from time to time, afford, as well of the progress of the Studies, Labours, and attempts of the Curious and learned in things of this kind, as of their compleat Discoveries and performances: To the end, that such Productions being clearly and truly communicated, desires after solid and usefull knowledge may be further entertained, ingenious Endeavours and Undertakings cherished, and those, addicted to and conversant in such matters, may be invited and encouraged to search, try, and find out new things, impart their knowledge to one another, and contribute what they can to the Grand design of improving Natural knowledge, and perfecting all *Philosophical Arts, and Sciences*. All for the Glory of God, the Honour and Advantage of these Kingdoms, and the Universal Good of Mankind.

There is nothing more necessary for promoting the improvement of science than the communication to those who apply their studies so that things are discovered or put into practise by others.

It is proper to employ this Journal to gratify those whose engagement in such studies entitles them to the knowledge of science

Because science is clearly communicated here, further ideas may be entertained, ingenious endeavours and undertakings cherished, and those, addicted to and conversant in such matters, are invited and encouraged to search, try and find new things, impart their knowledge to one another, and contribute what they can to the grand design of improving natural knowledge and perfecting science.

All for the glory of God, the honour and advantage of these kingdoms, and the universal good of mankind.

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The 'minutes' of science

Thus, the principles of scientific communication were begun

- To communicate observations to others
- To conduct further research based on those observations
- To create a scientific record

“Science does not exist until it is published”

Drummond Rennie, Deputy Editor, *JAMA*
The present state of medical journals. *Lancet* 1998, **352**:S18–S22



Editorial Freedom

Freedom of the press implies that all people should have the right to express themselves in writing or in any other way of expression of personal opinion or creativity. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights indicates:

“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”

This philosophy is usually accompanied by legislation ensuring various degrees of freedom of scientific research, publishing, press and printing the depth to which these laws are entrenched in a country's legal system can go as far down as its constitution.



What is COPE?

- Founded April 1997 by medical journal editors Mike Farthing (*Gut*), Richard Horton (*The Lancet*) and Richard Smith (*BMJ*)
- Initially, to provide a forum for editors on how best to deal with possible breaches in publication ethics
- 1999: Published guidelines on good publication practice
- 2000: COPE matures with elected chair, vice-chair, treasurer and council officers, and a constitution
- 2004: Website launched
- 2005: Published Code of Conduct for Editors



What is COPE?

- 2007: Published 16 flowcharts on how to deal with misconduct: redundant publication, plagiarism, fabricated data, changes in authorship, conflict of interest, lack of ethics, reviewer misconduct, and ghost, guest, or gift authorship.



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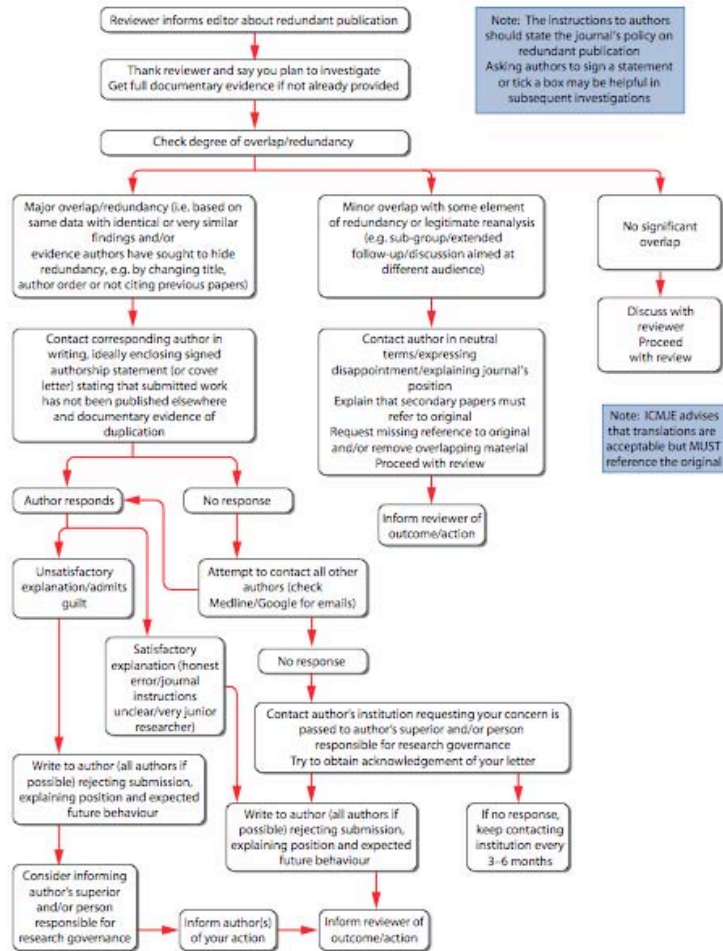
Committee on Publication Ethics Flowchart
www.publicationethics.org.uk



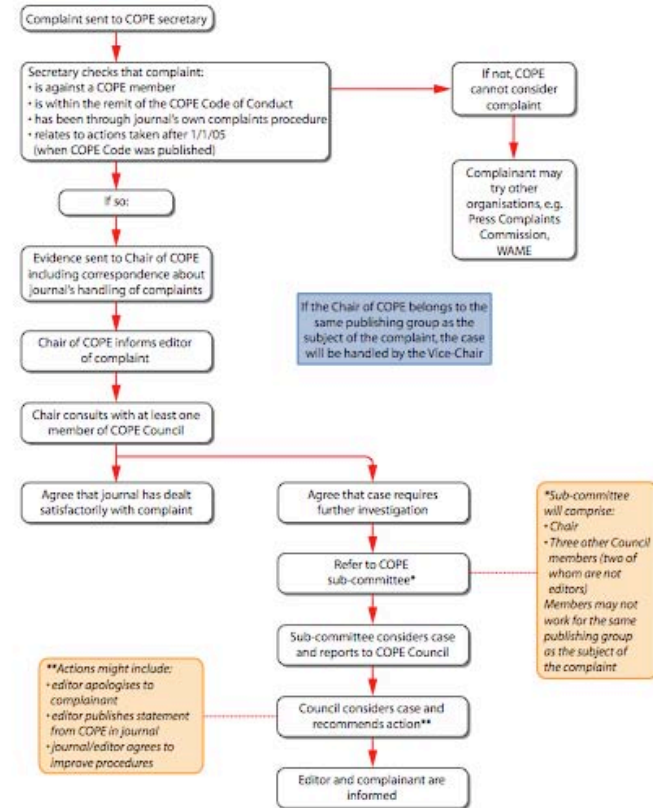
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What to do if you suspect redundant (duplicate) publication (a) Suspected redundant publication in a submitted manuscript



How COPE handles complaints against editors



www.publicationethics.org.uk



What is COPE?

- 2007: Published 16 flowcharts on how to deal with misconduct: redundant publication, plagiarism, fabricated data, changes in authorship, conflict of interest, lack of ethics, reviewer misconduct, and ghost, guest, or gift authorship.
- Four meetings a year of anonymous discussion of around 40 cases of suspected misconduct
- Advice to editors on how to proceed
- It acts as a database on research misconduct cases (and outcomes if available) documented on website
- Annual conferences and reports



COPE members

- 314 members
- 420 journals
- from 34 countries: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, Croatia, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Iceland, India, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Malawi, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Romania, Serbia, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, UK, USA, and Venezuela



COPE's future

- Application for charitable status
- Improved website with members area: wiki, blog, sample letters, reference database, presentations and, archive of cases & advice
- Research programme into publication misconduct
- CrossCheck, anti-plagiarism screening programme
- Quarterly newsletter
- Online distance-learning course on publication misconduct
- Audit and COPE Marque of Good Publication Practice



Conclusions

- Should scientific journals adopt any policies to address the problem of dual use and to prevent malevolent use of published data?

Council agreed that this issue is not in COPE's remit and COPE's position on the editorial independence of the editor still stands.

COPE does not believe that it should tell editors what to publish or that the freedom of publication should be restricted



Conclusions

- What is the role of the editors, editorial board, and referees?

Editors of biomedical journals should be responsible for everything published in their journals. They should strive to:

- **meet the needs of readers and authors**
- **ensure the quality of the material they publish**
- **champion freedom of expression in science**
- **maintain the integrity of the scientific record**

COPE Code of Conduct 2005



Conclusions

- What is the role of the editors, editorial board, and referees?

Editors' decisions to accept or reject a paper for publication should be based only on the paper's importance, originality, and clarity, and the study's relevance to the remit of the journal.

COPE Code of Conduct 2005



Conclusions

- What is the role of the editors, editorial board, and referees?

Notwithstanding the economic and political realities of their journals, editors should make decisions on which articles to publish based on quality and suitability for readers rather than for immediate financial or political gain.

COPE Code of Conduct 2005



Conclusions

- Should the freedom of publication be restricted?

COPE does not believe that it should tell editors what to publish or that the freedom of publication should be restricted



www.fghp.org

Forum for Global Health Protection

is an independent, not-for-profit association established with support from the UK's Health Protection Agency. It provides research-based information for scientists, public health policy-makers, and the international business community.

News

Our daily service publishes articles and a round up of news from the best academic journals and news sources from around the world, identifying and tracking emerging health threats. It critically reviews the very latest published research, enabling clinicians, scientists, and other public-health officials to access the latest intelligence on emerging health threats. We hope to create a vibrant Forum by providing the ability to comment on articles and post links, enabling our professional readers to exchange information and opinions.

Monitor

The *Global Health Threats Monitor* is a weekly newsletter for the international business community. It distils the latest scientific research and global health-risk intelligence into a form and language appropriate for a serious but non-scientific audience. Edited versions of our news articles from the previous week are included with updates on serious outbreaks of fatal diseases from around the world, including the latest avian influenza situation.

Information

An *A-Z of Health Threats* is being developed as a wiki, encouraging clinicians, scientists, and public-health officials to provide information on emerging hazards to human health. *Conferences and Meetings* are listed along with the *Funding and Grants* for research into emerging health threats. Links to and descriptions of major organisations, national, and international public health institutions are provided.



www.fghp.org/journal

Emerging Health Threats

Journal

Emerging Health Threats is an international, peer-reviewed journal established to publish the latest research of the highest standard on new and emerging threats to human health. The focus of the Journal is threats from any source, including the environment, chemicals, radiation, pathogens, and society. The Journal welcomes papers on the preparedness and response to natural or man-made disasters, including those that involve the deliberate release of chemical, biological, or radionuclear material. The Journal encourages the submission of investigative studies that promote the understanding of factors involved in the emergence, prevention, and elimination of human health threats. Articles on funding, research, and resource allocation, identifying possible present and future deficiencies will be considered if there is specific relevance to emerging threats. Content will be determined by novelty and scope of the threat, and by scientific excellence. The Journal seeks high-quality submissions from academic, industrial, clinical practice, public health, and government research and planning sectors across all of these areas.

Emerging Health Threats will be published online, Open Access, with no charges to authors nor readers. Papers will be deposited in UK PubMedCentral. ISSN 1752-8550.

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