



**C O P E**

**COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION ETHICS**

# In the beginning...

- COPE was started in 1997 as an informal forum for discussing ethical issues relating to research and publication in biomedical journal publishing
- Membership of COPE was aimed at editors of scholarly (learned) journals

# In 2007...

- COPE was more formally established as a limited company and as a UK-registered charity
- COPE's stated aim is "*The promotion for the public benefit of ethical standards of conduct in scientific research and the publication of science journals*"
- In 2007/08, membership increased substantially: from around 350 editors to around 3500
- By 2010 COPE had over 5000 members

# The scope of COPE

- COPE is international in scope and fully inclusive in subject matter
- All academic disciplines and fields are now covered, for example:
  - Biomedical
  - Pure and applied sciences
  - Engineering and technology
  - Arts and humanities

# Ethical issues considered

- Plagiarism
- Fabrication
- Falsification
- Redundant publication
- Selective reporting
- Unethical research
- Authorship issues
- Reviewer misconduct
- Editor misconduct
- Conflicts of interest

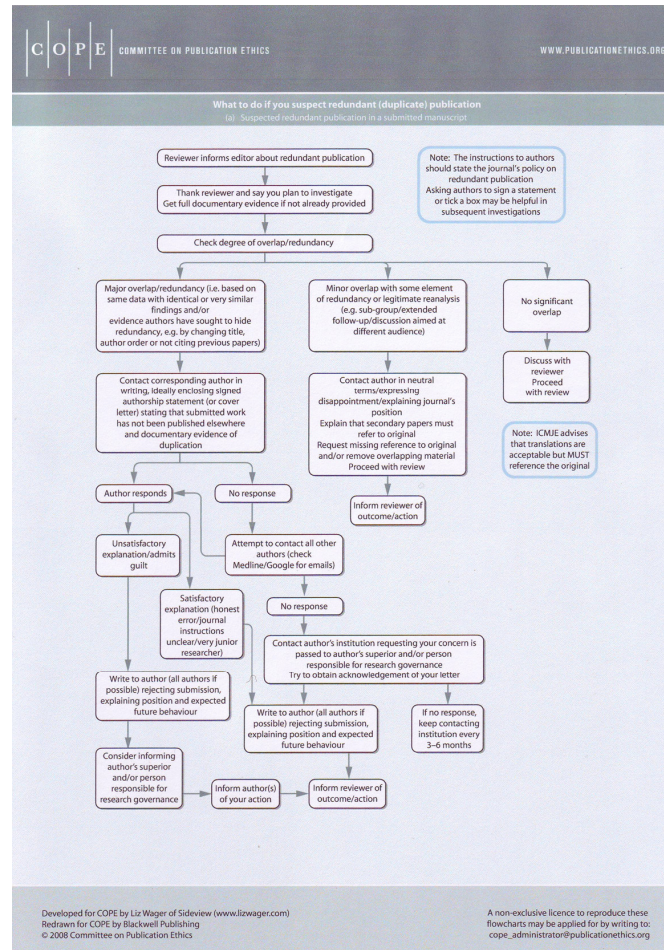
# COPE in action (1): website

COPE has produced:

- a series of flowcharts
- a Code of Conduct
- Best Practice document
- sample letters for handling common problems
- retraction guidelines (December 2009)
- other guidance (eg for editorial boards)

All are available at [www.publicationethics.org](http://www.publicationethics.org)

# COPE flowchart



# The flowcharts cover:

- Redundant (duplicate) publication
- Plagiarism
- Fabricated data
- Changes in authorship
- Ghost, guest or gift authorship
- Conflicts of interest
- General suspected ethical concerns
- Reviewer misconduct
- How COPE deals with complaints

# COPE in action (2): advice and guidance to members

- COPE offers advice and guidance to its members, primarily through its quarterly **Forum** meetings
- Meetings are held in London but members can take part via tele-conference
- The Forum allows members to benefit from the views and experience of other members
- Recommendations are published on the website

# COPE in action (3): complaints, advice and guidance

- Individuals can bring complaints against COPE members if they consider that they have not followed the Code of Conduct
- COPE will only consider a complaint after all appropriate internal mechanisms at the journal have been exhausted
- COPE does **not** adjudicate on the merits of individual cases (eg whether publication misconduct has occurred) but simply on whether the COPE member followed appropriate procedures

# COPE: other services

- Ethics Audit (members only)
- Newsletter (quarterly)
- Annual seminar (UK and US)

Planned services include:

- Distance learning course for editors
- Code of Conduct for publishers

# Joining COPE

- Membership of COPE is currently available for:
  - Journals
  - Associate members

# COPE: journal members

- applicants must be an Editor or Editor-in-Chief of a peer-reviewed scholarly journal;

*or*

- a company or body whose primary business and object is publishing that includes publishing of peer-reviewed scholarly journals

# COPE: associate and associate corporate members

- Individuals or companies may apply for Associate membership
- to be eligible the applicant must be a person or company having an interest in COPE's objects and who is working in or associated with the publication of peer-reviewed scholarly journals; or has a significant interest in safeguarding the integrity of the academic record and who is not eligible for Full Membership

# COPE: cost of joining

- Journal membership fees are based on publication frequency (or turnover for continuous publications)
- COPE welcomes enquiries from individual journals or publishing companies
- Reduced subscriptions are available for developing-world journals
- Associate membership is currently £50 pa

# COPE governance

- COPE is registered as a charity in the UK
- The work of COPE is guided by an elected Council
- Current officers are: Liz Wager (Chair), Sabine Kleinert (Vice-Chair), Ginny Barbour (Secretary) and Richard O'Hagan (Treasurer)
- Day-to-day management of COPE's business affairs is the responsibility of the permanent staff:
  - **Operations Manager** (Natalie Ridgeway)
  - **Administrator** (Linda Gough)

# COPE contact details

- **Registered office:**

22 Nelson Close  
Harleston  
Norfolk  
IP20 9HL

Phone +44 (0)1379-854181

- **Membership enquiries:**

[cope\\_administrator@publicationethics.org](mailto:cope_administrator@publicationethics.org)

- **Website:**

[www.publicationethics.org](http://www.publicationethics.org)