

Research Integrity Issues in APR Countries

- ☐ No training in scientific writing
- ☐ Lack of statutory controls and clear policies to deal with scientific misconduct
- ☐ Linking publications to professional growth
- ☐ Increasing pressure to publish
- ☐ Predatory publishing

Research Integrity Issues in APR Countries

- ❑ Bureaucratic, non-transparent systems and poor accountability are conducive for misconduct
- ❑ Feudal work cultures breed sycophancy, parochialism and loyalty at the cost of integrity

What might help

- ☐ Education in good research and publishing practices
- ☐ Right-to-information
- ☐ Whistleblower protection
- ☐ Public engagement of senior research mentors and policy makers will be needed to stem the rot



Mahatma Gandhi: “No cause can triumph unless there are faithful agents to carry it through”

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PLENARY 5

Issues faced by APRI region/countries

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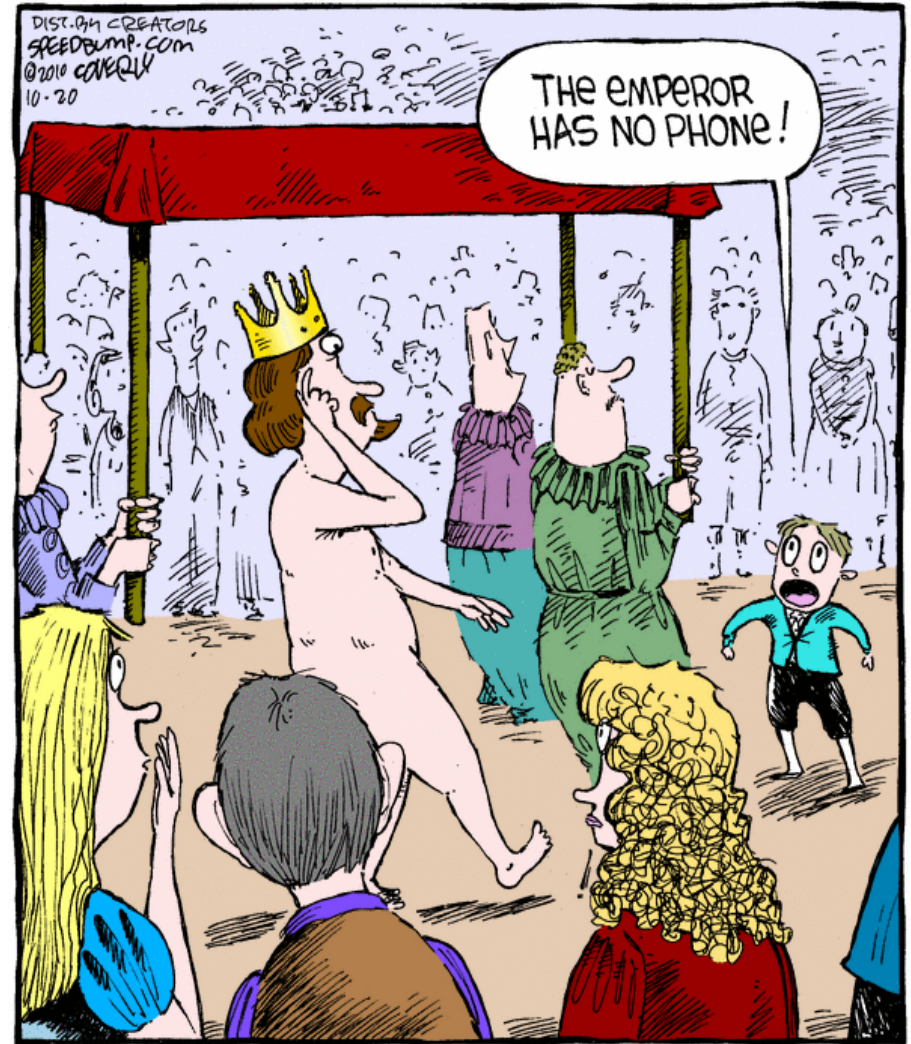
ISSUES and QRPs

MISCONDUCT

- Plagiarism
- Data fabrication and falsification
- Citation manipulation
- Duplicate manuscript submission

Focus on Plagiarism!

- Is it being overemphasized in developing countries
- Lack of understanding regarding other forms of **misconducts** which breach integrity.



Questionable Research Practices

- Conflict of Interest
- Inappropriate author contribution
- Inappropriate and misleading affiliation
- Avoiding IRB / Ethical approvals
- Lack of prerequisites to perform research.
- Unable to implement Biosafety and lab safety
- Data Safety and Monitoring Board
- Compliance

CHALLENGES FOR UNIVERSITIES

- Sources and support to handle various situations
- Cases often put one employee against the other.
- University's conflict of interest.
- Reporting that another colleague who may have violated the standards is not easy.
- Anonymity is possible in some cases, but not always. Allegations of irresponsible behavior can have serious consequences for all parties concerned.

ISSUES

- Publication Ethics not being followed diligently
- COPE and ICMJE guidelines are often ignored
- Many institutions still do not have policies and guidelines on:
 - Authorship
 - Responsible conduct of research
 - Misconduct and how to handle allegations
 - Intellectual Property Rights

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Though Pakistan National Bioethics Committee has made considerable progress in promoting ethical research in recent years, it still faces some challenges.
- Educating individuals/groups in responsible conduct of research.
- Promote the development of effective policies and an ethical research environment, it may be useful for NIH/ORI to sponsor trainings on research integrity in APRI countries.
- Adopt ORI rules to address Conflicts of Interest pertaining to funding and publication.
- Protecting whistleblowers: People often do not report problems for fear of being exposed.
- Open communication is essential for promoting integrity in research.



Some Persistent Problems in Research Integrity Management

-- Major issues faced by Mainland China

1. A recent case and its investigation
2. Problems highlighted with the case
3. What can / should be done ?

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1. A Plagiarism case (reported by media recently)

Prof. L, Dean of Law School, Guangxi University of Finance and Economics was accused of multiple counts of plagiarism:

— 9 published papers, similar texts accounted for 30-94% .

The Academic Committee (AC) of the university initiated the investigation procedure ——

(1) 5 experts were invited to make judgement, their conclusion: accused plagiarism does exist with the papers.

(2) After an appeal by the respondent, 3 other experts were assigned the job, they changed the way of measuring similar texts, and the percentages were reduced to around/below 30%.

(3) The AC anonymously voted that no plagiarism exists.

http://china.cnr.cn/xwwgf/20170123/t20170123_523524662.shtml

The questionable investigation process

- (1) The 3 experts removed some citations from relevant articles before calculating similarity rate. (How much, why?)
- (2) The 3 experts only presented the percentage of repetition, without making finding. (What are their responsibilities?)
- (3) Academic Committee made the decision by vote (Is that based on sufficient information? Its accountability?)
- (4) “*There is no arbitrary standard concerning what constitute plagiarism in China.*” (Yes, there is no such standard)
- (5) “*The investigation was conducted in accordance with the relevant law, decree and statute.*” (Details are not given)

2. Problems highlighted with the case

- (1) The overall situation of the handling of research misconduct cases by the Chinese institutions? (Are the similar cases rare?)
- (2) The existing policies and procedures are not necessarily implemented well (including too “flexible”)
- (3) Academic norms and what constitute research misconduct are not always agreed upon. (e.g. the “threshold” of plagiarism)
- (4) The problems with the mechanism for handling research misconduct. (e.g. adjudication by an individual or a committee)
- (5) Many investigation findings of and the sanctions against research misconduct cases are questioned. (“Tacitus Trap”?)
- (6) How to solve these common and persistent problems. (by whom, through what approaches, etc.)

3. What can / should be done

- **A better mechanism**, including the definition of responsibility and accountability of investigators and relevant committees, the availability of experienced staff and investigators, and the oversight of handling processes, etc.
- **Essential support**, including necessary training, sharing of experiences/standards, special/technical support by third parties.
- **Education of academic norms**, including the clarification of accepted research practices, the scope of research misconduct and QRPs, and the development of relevant courses and textbooks.
- **Making concerted efforts**, especially bring out the initiative of universities and research institutions, not only that of government agencies, enterprises (offering online courses, etc.), and scientists.

Looking into the future

Some good trends in Mainland China:

- Encouraging the designation of Academic integrity officers.
- Responsible investigation of some universities, e.g. Fudan.
- Developing guidelines for judging accepted practices and research misconduct, e.g. CNKI (an academic database company).

What international cooperation can contribute:

- Offering RCR education (CITI, Epigeum courses), and the training of instructors (APRI Network meeting, WCRI_2017).
- Sharing experiences/standards of investigation, including the training of RIO/AIOs (e.g. Boot Camp), and technical assistance.

APRI Network Meeting 2017

(Tuesday, 21 February)

Plenary 5: Issues faced by APRI region/countries

Professor Alex Wai

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NAS report definition of Research Integrity (RI)

<https://www.nap.edu/read/10430/chapter/2#5>

For the individual scientist, integrity embodies above all a commitment to intellectual honesty and personal responsibility for one's actions and to a range of practices that characterize the responsible conduct of research, including

- *intellectual honesty in proposing, performing, and reporting research;*
- *accuracy in representing contributions to research proposals and reports;*

NAS report definition of RI (Cont'd)

- *fairness in peer review;*
- *collegiality in scientific interactions, including communications and sharing of resources;*
- *transparency in conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest;*
- *protection of human subjects in the conduct of research;*
- *humane care of animals in the conduct of research; and*
- *adherence to the mutual responsibilities between investigators and their research teams.*

➤ Research Integrity is not a set of hard and fast rules.

Issues on RI

- Asian and Pacific Rim region/countries are multi-cultural and pluralistic. The stage of development between countries in the Asia Pacific Region varies quite significantly. It is difficult to generalize.
- Most of the issues on research integrity are no different from that of the other part of the world.

Issues on RI (Cont'd)

- Factors conducive to breach of Research Integrity:
 - ❖ Pressure to succeed: publish or perish
 - ❖ The over emphasis of numerical measures – impact factors, H-factors, citation, number of publications, ...
 - ❖ League tables put pressure on the university management
 - ❖ In some countries, the use of monetary reward for publications increases the reward for breaching research integrity
 - ❖ Research resource is highly competitive
 - ❖ Culture – people from different countries may have different perception on, for example, plagiarism, animal right, etc.
 - ❖ Governance on research integrity

Thank you!



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