

Acta Dermatovenereologica Alpina, Pannonica et Adriatica and scientific misconduct

M. Poljak, editor

In 2007 we received two manuscripts from a group of Greek researchers that had previously published four papers in our journal (1–4), entitled “Painful lumps on the trunk of an 82-year-old heavy smoker” and “Qualification of cytology in tumors and tumor-like conditions of the tongue: A study of 27 cases.” For both manuscripts Demetrio Tamiolakis from the Department of Cytology, General Hospital of Chania, Crete, Greece was the first author. During the final proofreading of the manuscript “Painful lumps on the trunk of an 82-year-old heavy smoker” we were unpleasantly surprised when we recognized that 39 lines of the discussion were copied word-for-word from an article published by A. C. Inamadar et al. in the *Indian Journal of Dermatology, Venereology and Leprology* in 2003 (5). The primary source was, however, not cited. Both the first and the corresponding authors were contacted and informed that this represented plagiarism, which is considered serious scientific misconduct. Consequently, the authors withdrew their manuscript “Painful lumps on the trunk of an 82-year-old heavy smoker” and, to our surprise, also the second manuscript “Qualification of cytology in tumors and tumor-like conditions of the tongue: A study of 27 cases,” for which no question of scientific misconduct had been raised.

All of this encouraged us to double check their papers previously published in our journal (1–4) for possible plagiarism. We were very unpleasantly surprised when we determined that the article “CD30 (Ki-1) molecule expression in human embryonal epithelial cells of the basal layer of the developing epidermis and epidermal buds and its potential significance for embryogenesis” published in our journal by Tamiolakis et al. in 2005 (1) very closely resembled an article published by the same research group in the *Romanian Journal of Biophysics* in 2004 (6) as well as an article published by the same research group in *Clinical and Experimental Medicine* in 2005 (7). Because triplicate publication is considered serious scientific misconduct and infringement of copyright, corresponding author has retracted the paper in this issue of our journal (8).

In addition to this triplicate publication, we also determined that the article “Jaw bone metastases: four cases” published in our journal by Tamiolakis et al. in 2007 (4) very closely resembles an article published by the same research group in *Chirurgia (Bucur)* in 2007 (9). Therefore the corresponding author has also retracted this paper (10). Interestingly, although the texts of both papers are virtually identical, the article titles and abstracts are completely different, potentially to prevent easy direct comparison.

After careful inspection of the Pubmed records

of D. Tamiolakis and N. Papadopoulos, we noted a recent retraction of a paper by the same research group in Pubmed (11), as well as a removal of particular authors from three additional papers (12–14).

Plagiarism, duplicate publications, and other methods of scientific misconduct undermine the value of research (15). Scientific misconduct is difficult to detect, especially if it occurs in journals with a relatively small readership (16, 17), like our journal. Fortunately, there are now dozens of commercial and free tools available for detecting plagiarism and other methods of scientific misconduct. Perhaps the most popular programs are iParadigm's Ithenticate (<http://ithenticate.com/>) and TurnItIn's originality checking (<http://turnitin.com/>), which recently

partnered with CrossRef (<http://www.crossref.org/>) to create CrossCheck, a new service for verifying the originality of scholarly content (18). *Acta Dermatovenerologica Alpina, Pannonica et Adriatica* will significantly strengthen the oversight of scientific integrity of manuscripts accepted for publications, as recently suggested (18–20). All manuscripts accepted for publication will be checked vigorously for scientific integrity just as they are for the “big” journals. As recently suggested by the editors of *The Lancet* (15), all of us (authors, peer reviewers, and editors) must strive to achieve an environment of sound research integrity that researchers can be proud of, and that the public knows they can trust.

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