

Plagiarism

V. Vlassov, MD

Russian Society for Evidence Based
Medicine

It is every where

Scientific fraud: action needed in China

On Dec 19, 2009, editors at *Acta Crystallographica Section E* alerted the scientific community to a disgraceful pattern of fraud involving papers they had published in 2007. At least 70 false crystal structures were reported—mainly from two groups led by Hua Zhong and Tao Liu, both at Jingtangshan University, Jian, China. All authors have now agreed to retraction of 41 papers published by Zhong and 29 by Liu. It is rather surprising that wrongdoing on such a scale evaded detection during peer review and, considering that crystal structures are deposited in public databases upon publication, that the truth has been uncovered so slowly.

In China, the government controls almost all funding for research. As in other countries, to gain funding researchers need to publish as many papers in high impact journals as possible. According to *Science Citation Index* and other resources, Chinese authors published 271 000 papers in 2008, roughly 11.5% of the world's total. This incident is not the first time that scientific fraud has occurred in China. Regulations to monitor state-funded research projects were announced in 2006 by the Ministry of Science and Technology

in response to six high-profile cases of scientific misconduct. A new circular was issued on March 19, 2009, aimed at preventing misconduct in higher education institutions—punishment for breaching the new rules could involve warnings, dismissal, or legal action. Research programmes could be suspended or terminated, funding could be withdrawn, or awards and honours revoked.

Such extensive fraud is disappointing—not only does it indicate a substantial waste of research time and money, but it is likely that, whatever punishments do result, damage to the reputations of the researchers, institutions, and journal concerned is likely to be disproportionately great. Clearly, China's Government needs to take this episode as a cue to reinvigorate standards for teaching research ethics and for the conduct of research itself, as well as establishing robust and transparent procedures for handling allegations of scientific misconduct to prevent further instances of fraud.

For Hu Jintao's goal of China becoming a research superpower by 2020 to be credible, China must assume stronger leadership in scientific integrity. ■ *The Lancet*

Special culture of war: all means are legitimate

Economist.com

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Feb 11th 2010 | PARIS AND TALLINN
From The Economist print edition

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What Russian opposition
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The Mistral in St Petersburg: an ill wind

CHAMPAGNE and other French products may soon face declining sales in Tallinn, Tbilisi and places

The cruel sea

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Special culture of war: all means are legitimate

S. Savitskaia, Communist MP, former cosmonaut: Did we lost the knowledge how to build the arms? If we do not know some secrets, which are known to other countries, then we have military technical intelligence. Lets order them to act, members of the Government!"

<http://newsru.com/russia/10mar2010/mistral.html>

Scientific degrees in Russia

Necessary comment

Except “educational” degrees (like LD, MD), in Russia university graduates who do research may acquire the ‘scientific’ degrees *candidate of science*, next *doctor of science*. They are given after defense of a thesis.

Important: Since Soviet times one don’t need to go through postdoctoral course to obtain the *candidate of science* degree (eq. PhD).



Candidate of science, dissertation defended in 1997 г., while being vice-major of S. Petersburg; defended before the Dissertation Council of the Gornii Institute. Later the rector of this institute became the chief of the election campaign in S. Petersburg.

The climax

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From [The Sunday Times](#) March 26, 2006

Putin accused of plagiarising his PhD thesis

Tony Allen-Mills, New York

Putin was labelled a plagiarist yesterday after a pair of researchers at the Brookings Institution, a Washington DC

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Vitalii Ginzburg, RAS, Nobel laureate:
I do not know details... probably he was cheated. He is clever enough for not doing such things and not understand that it is counterproductive..

Probably he asked ... assistant to collect the necessary materials, and did not checked the sources himself, what is not excusable, of course. But I do not believe in the intentional Putin's plagate, especially taking his profession into account

This is not that simple

- Under Russian law the dissertation must be based on the studies done by candidate for the degree.
- Candidate dissertation must be produced by author, personally.
- If not - may be understood as a malefaction with an intention to receive money, privileges

218 of 450 chairs in Lower Chamber of Russian “parliament” are occupied by Candidates and Doctors of Science

Internet ads: dozens of offers to prepare and help in preparation of dissertation. The price: \$5k - \$50k.

The “full service” includes the arrangements of publications and “support” in negotiations with dissertation council (of the university or research center)

Prevalence in dissertations

Chairman of Higher attestation commission

- Up to 1/3 of dissertations are bought for money (2006)
- 1000 dissertations rejected because of plagiarism (2007, it is about 3%)
- Computer-based check is introduced in 2008

RAS membership

2006: of 262 competitors for membership only 136 work in science (heads of laboratories etc.)

Others:

V.G. Sister – CEO, “Moscow technology and science committee, Inc.”;

A.F. Diakov – President, “United electroindustrial complex”;

M.I. Kleandrov – Judge, Constitutional Court;

S.N. Hadjiev – Chairman of the overseeing committee, RosBusinessBank;

A. A. Kokoshin – MP, Chairman of the committee for connections with compatriots;

B.N. Kuzyk – CEO, NPK Holding;

S.V. Stepashin – Head, National accountant office;

A.V. Gordeev – Minister of agriculture

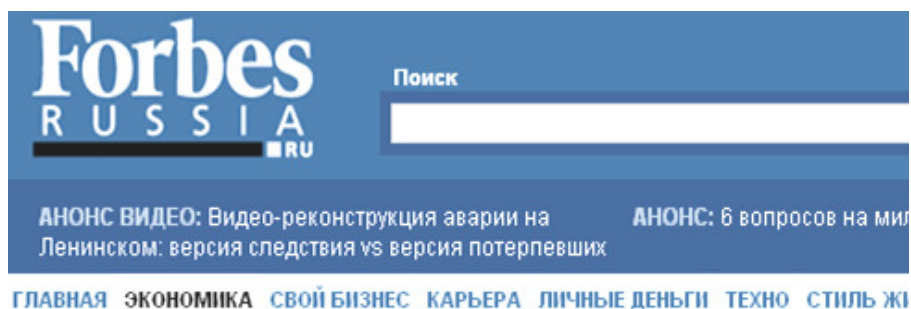
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Is academy special?

- Academy is more intolerant to plagiarism
- Politicians and business people only bring their comfort with plagiarism when they enter academy

RAS member accused in plagiarism

Vice President RAS,
Alexander Nekipelov



Крупные заимствования

Российского академика обвиняют в списывании. Не его первого

Анна Соколова | 24 декабря 2009 17:41

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Академик Александр Некипелов

«В работе содержатся серьезные теоретические новации, ряд остро дискуссионных идей и подходов», — говорится в аннотации к монографии вице-президента Российской академии наук, члена советов директоров «Роснефти» и «Транснефти» Александра

RAS ad hoc commission chaired by RAS president found that there was no plagiarism, because many pages of translated text (not marked as quote) were referenced



Academic “elite”

- Connected to old party and modern state/business elite
- Part of the ‘consumers’ and ‘providers’ of the dissertation services
- Suppressing the honest criticism of plagiarism

Asim Kurjak, MD,
Zagreb medical school

Professional regulation

Role of systematic reviews in detecting plagiarism: case of
Asim Kurjak

Iain Chalmers

Plagiarism is difficult to detect, especially if it occurs in journals with a small readership. Systematic reviews can help to identify cases, but as this case shows, unless perpetrators face greater sanctions the problem is unlikely to go away

Principled actions against plagiarizer



- Dangerous
- Probably influential

Ana Marushich, Matko Marushich
Editors, Croatian Medical Journal

Is plagiarism understood in Russia?

- There are cases of persecution
- Terminology is stable
- But it is not in the agenda
 - In MEDLINE - 2 records in Russian
 - After 2000 only one record

But: 2 200 000 Russian in Google
during last year

(OK, >1/2 is about music/movies)

Infrastructure?

No one state or funding body, no academy/society has an entity for management of cases of research misconduct

Only in 2009 Moscow State University introduced the Code of Ethics naming plagiarism a misconduct

Culture and Plagiarism

(After Ivana Bušljeta Banks & Kristina Kruhak (Zagreb School of Economics and Management))

- Attitudes towards intellectual property differ between cultures
 - Croatia as a collectivist culture:
 - copyright and privacy issues
 - “public domain”
 - helping a friend takes precedence over academic honesty concerns

VVV: Even in situation of competition Russian students may offer their texts to plagiarize

Culture and Plagiarism

- In studies of students' plagiarism the Asian students' proneness is discussed and explained by their tradition of respect to authority ☺
- If “text ownership” is a Western concept and rather new one, cultures
 - a) less westernized and
 - b) isolated for a century (USSR)

May differ from the West

Do they really differ?

Experience

Some writers on plagiarism problem in Russia noted that they personally were asked for excuse by plagiarizers; the plagiarism is:

= usually intentional,

= but understood as negligible misconduct

= especially if plagiarizer is not caught

Pessimism

Being excited by perspective of introduction of high standards of medical journalism in 1997 now I am very pessimistic. I found that the improvement in relation to plagiarism and all type of research misconduct strongly depends from gross situation with ethics of research and moral state of the nation.

Savely Baschinskii, MD, journal publisher

Place for optimism?

- Russian computer/internet based plagiarism-search engines are developed
- Good professors in universities employ plagiarism-finding services and thus students learn about plagiarism
- Students struggling against notorious dean in Moscow University did spot his plagiarism
- In general I hope that Russia is not lost for the civilized world