REdundant (duplicate) Publication in a submitted manuscript

Notes
- The instructions to authors should state the journal’s policy on redundant publication.
- To help in future investigations, ask authors at submission stage to verify that their manuscript is original and has not been published elsewhere.
- During investigations, it may be helpful to request the institution’s policy.
- International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) advises that translations are acceptable but MUST reference the original.

Redundancy may be detected by text-matching software (eg, Crossref Similarity Check)

Reviewer informs editor about redundant publication

Thank reviewer and say you plan to investigate. Get full documentary evidence if not already provided

Check extent and nature of overlap/redundancy

Major overlap/redundancy (ie, based on same data with identical or very similar findings and/or evidence that authors have sought to hide redundancy, for example, by changing title or author order, or not citing previous papers)

Contact corresponding author in writing, ideally enclosing signed authorship statement (or cover letter) stating that submitted work has not been published elsewhere and documentary evidence of duplication

Minor overlap with some element of redundancy or legitimate overlap (eg, methods) or re-analysis (eg, subgroup analysis/extended follow-up/discussion aimed at different audience)

Contact author in neutral terms expressing concern/explaining journal’s position. Explain that secondary papers must refer to original. Request missing reference to original and/or remove overlapping material

No significant overlap

Inform reviewer of decision and proceed with review

WRITE TO AUTHOR (ALL AUTHORS IF POSSIBLE) REJECTING MANUSCRIPT, EXPLAINING POSITION AND EXPECTED FUTURE BEHAVIOUR

Unsatisfactory explanation/admits guilt

Write to author (all authors if possible), explaining position and expected future behaviour. Consider if need for rejection or revision

Satisfactory explanation (honest error/journal instructions unclear/legitimate re-publication)

Inform author(s) of your action

Author responds

No response

Inform reviewer of outcome/action and proceed with review

Attempt to contact all other authors (check Medline/Google for current affiliations/emails)

Unsatisfactory explanation/admits guilt

If no response,

KEEP CONTACTING INSTITUTION EVERY 3-6 MONTHS

Inform author's institution requesting your concern is passed to author's superior and/or person responsible for research governance

Satisfactory explanation (honest error/journal instructions unclear/legitimate re-publication)

Write to author (all authors if possible), explaining position and expected future behaviour. Consider if need for rejection or revision

Author responds

No response

Inform reviewer of outcome/action

INFORM REVIEWER OF OUTCOME/ACTION

Consider informing author’s superior and/or person responsible for research governance

No response

INFORM REVIEWER OF OUTCOME/ACTION

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If no response,