**A PUBLISHED ARTICLE IS CRITICISED VIA DIRECT EMAIL TO THE EDITOR OR PUBLISHER. THIS COULD INCLUDE ANONYMOUS OR NOT ANONYMOUS CONCERNS ABOUT SOUNDNESS OF THE DATA OR ALLEGATIONS OF PLAGIARISM, FIGURE MANIPULATION, OR OTHER FORMS OF MISCONDUCT**

Let the publisher and the communications team know about any allegations. It is useful to establish an escalation procedure and agree a process for responding ahead of time.

Do the allegations contain specific and detailed evidence to support the claim?

- **Yes**
  - Investigate according to the appropriate COPE Flowchart or guidance, and also follow your publisher’s guidance.

- **No**
  - Request more detail saying that otherwise you are unable to investigate.
    - When more detail is provided, investigate.
    - No more details provided.

**IF THERE IS AN OUTCOME TO YOUR INVESTIGATION, SUCH AS A CORRECTION OR RETRACTION, INFORM THE PERSON WHO ORIGINALLY RAISED THE CONCERN**

**Notes**

- The tone of the allegations may be aggressive or personal. Respond politely; don’t get drawn into personal exchanges.
- Sometimes the whistleblower may prefer to remain anonymous. It is important not to try to ‘out’ people who wish to be anonymous.

Cite this as:
COPE Council. COPE Flowcharts and infographics - Responding to whistleblowers when concerns are raised directly - English.
https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.2.25
©2021 Committee on Publication Ethics (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) @publicationethics.org

Version 1: November 2015.