CITATION GAMES: MOCKING RESEARCH
ISMTE European Conference
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Matt Hodgkinson
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Matt joined Hindawi in 2016 as Head of Research Integrity, overseeing the research integrity processes and policies, and recently became Head of Editorial Policy and Ethics.

With a degree in Biological Sciences from Oxford and a Master’s in Genetics from Cambridge, Matt has worked in Open Access journal publishing since 2003, first as an editor on the BMC-series journals and then PLOS ONE.

He is a member of the council of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and an AuthorAID mentor.
COPE CORE PRACTICES

Policies and practices required to reach the highest standards in publication ethics:

- Allegations of misconduct
- Authorship and contributorship
- Complaints and appeals
- Conflicts of interest/Competing interests
- Data and reproducibility
- Ethical oversight
- Intellectual property
- Journal management
- Peer review processes
- Post-publication discussions and corrections

publicationethics.org/core-practices
PRINCIPLES OF TRANSPARENCY AND BEST PRACTICE IN SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING

COPE, the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA), and the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME):

Process for identification of and dealing with allegations of research misconduct: Publishers and editors shall take reasonable steps to identify and prevent the publication of papers where research misconduct has occurred, including plagiarism, citation manipulation, and data falsification/fabrication, among others. In no case shall a journal or its editors encourage such misconduct, or knowingly allow such misconduct to take place. In the event that a journal’s publisher or editors are made aware of any allegation of research misconduct relating to a published article in their journal, the publisher or editor shall follow COPE’s guidelines (or equivalent) in dealing with allegations.

doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.1.12
WHY DO WE CITE ARTICLES?

“We are like dwarfs sitting on the shoulders of giants. We see more, and things that are more distant, than they did, not because our sight is superior or because we are taller than they, but because they raise us up, and by their great stature add to ours.”

John of Salisbury

- Support statements and arguments
- Give credit
- Explain methods

Building the wall of scholarship
- Collaborative
- Articles are the bricks
- Citations are the mortar

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Brick_wall_old.jpg
Man vyi, Wikimedia Commons, Public domain

publicationethics.org/news/citations-link-locate-discover-connect
CITATION MANIPULATION

Citation manipulation refers to the following types of behaviour:

- Excessive self-citation
- Gaming journal metrics
- Citation stacking or honorary citations

Citation manipulation takes different forms:

- Coercive citation
- Padding
- Citation cartels or rings

Survey: doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0187394
OTHER INAPPROPRIATE CITATION PRACTICE

Omission vs commission

• Not citing related articles
  • Prior versions of the same work
  • Salami slicing (authors’ related research)
  • Plagiarism or lack of novelty (others’ research)
  • Not acknowledging refutations

• Misciting
ANALYSING CITATIONS
Legitimate versus illegitimate citations

• Who requested?
• Who benefits?
• What is the context?

  • Relevance
  • Depth vs passing mention
  • Bulk citations

“There has been much work conducted in this field [1-50].”
WHY DOES IT HAPPEN?

Incentives for citation misconduct

• Journal metrics
  • Impact Factor

• Researcher-level metrics
  • H-index
  • Highly-Cited Researchers

• Normalized
• Little publicity

Clubby and ‘disturbing’ citation behavior by researchers in Italy has surged

By Giorgia Guglielmi | Sep. 11, 2019, 2:00 PM

The rate at which scientists in Italy cite themselves and their compatriots is rising faster than in 10 other developed countries, according to a new study. The surge in Italy’s clubby citation behavior is likely the result of a 2010 law requiring productivity standards for academic recruitment or promotion, the study authors say.

The findings are a cautionary tale for research administrators who rely too much on citation metrics in allocating resources and making decisions on career advancement, says study author Giuseppe De Nicolao, an engineer at the University of Pavia in Italy. Linking professional advancement to citation indicators can prod scientists into unintended behaviors and make the metrics unreliable, he says.

sciencemag.org/news/2019/09/clubby-and-disturbing-citation-behavior-researchers-italy-has-surged
SOLUTIONS AND COUNTER-MEASURES

Limiting citation manipulation and other inappropriate practices

- Have clear policies – and enforce them

- Monitor patterns
  - Initiative for Open Citations [i4oc.org](http://i4oc.org)
  - Elsevier and Wageningen University

- Talk about it
  - Tell institutions, publishers, Clarivate, etc.
  - Train/educate editors, reviewers, & authors

- Don’t incentivize
  - Don’t count self-citations?
  - Declaration on Research Assessment: [sfdora.org](http://sfdora.org) (not signed by COPE)

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**NEWS**  •  06 FEBRUARY 2020

**Highly cited researcher banned from journal board for citation abuse**

Investigation finds that biophysicist Kuo-Chen Chou repeatedly suggested dozens of citations be added to papers.

Richard Van Noorden

[nature.com/articles/d41586-020-00335-7](http://nature.com/articles/d41586-020-00335-7)
COPE’S ROLE

Education and advice

• Discussion document

• Cases: https://publicationethics.org/case/reviewer-requesting-addition-multiple-citations-their-own-work

• COPE members:
  • Present to COPE Forum
  • Advice from COPE Council and Publisher Forum
  • Facilitation and Integrity subcommittee https://publicationethics.org/facilitation-and-integrity-subcommittee
GREY AREAS OF CITATION

Is it OK to cite non-peer-reviewed literature?

• **Preprints** [doi.org/10.24318/R4WByaq2](doi.org/10.24318/R4WByaq2)
  “Journals should accept citation of preprint papers in journal submissions, and the reference format should make clear the preprint and non peer-reviewed status of the source”

• **Retractions** [doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.1.4](doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.1.4)
  - OK if the retraction is noted
  - How to track?
    - Crossmark metadata, Retraction Watch database and Zotero plugin, Scite.ai’s Reference Check

• **Predatory journals** [doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.3.6](doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.3.6)
  “Discourage citation of articles published in fake journals”
  - Not a binary and difficult to spot
  - May contradict other expectations
THANK YOU