Ethics of authorship in reporting results

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Committee for Scientific Integrity
Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic

All European Academies
Standing Committee on Science and Ethics

Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total staff</th>
<th>Researchers</th>
<th>Institutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academy</td>
<td>7 000</td>
<td>3 500</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phys. &amp; Techn. Sci.</td>
<td>2 500</td>
<td>1 300</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chem. &amp; Bio.</td>
<td>3 000</td>
<td>1 650</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soc. &amp; Human.</td>
<td>1 000</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>17</td>
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Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry
Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic

Staff ~ 240
Researchers ~ 120
Research misconduct is falsification, fabrication, and plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results.

All European Academies (ALLEA)

Federation of 53 Academies from 40 European countries

Founded 1994

ALLEA Standing Committee on Science and Ethics

2003 Memorandum on Scientific Integrity
Academy of Sciences of the CR
established
2002

Committee for Scientific Integrity

The Committee for Scientific Integrity
Inspired by
> The European Charter for Researchers, 2005/251/ES

> ALLEA Memorandum on Scientific Integrity

> Rules of Good Scientific Practice, Max Planck Society, 2000

Issued in 2006
Code of Ethics for Researchers
of the Academy of Sciences
of the Czech Republic

Most transgressions against the Code treated and solved within the Institutes

Unresolved cases submitted to the Committee for Scientific Integrity

Most frequent cases of dispute – authorship problems

Example 1: Significant contribution

> Presenting oneself as an author or co-author without having contributed to any significant extent

> Omitting names of co-authors who have made a significant contribution

Chemistry:

Multistep synthesis of a new substance takes many months, even more than 1 year

Structure must be confirmed, expensive equipment needed
Equipment cost **millions USD** > available just in a few laboratories

Operation of equipment and interpretation of results requires:
> relevant experimental skills
> strong theoretical background
> highly qualified specialist

Completion of the task takes
- **months** of the chemist’s time
- just **weeks, days or hours** of the operator’s time

**Question:**
When does the operator’s contribution become **significant**?
The chemist gladly offers co-authorship because:

**Without** the operator's contribution the results are hardly publishable.

**Not offering** the co-authorship would apparently **decrease** the operator's **readiness** for future collaboration.

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**Evaluation of scientists:**
Important **criterion** is **number of papers** in impacted journals and **number of citations**.

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**Operators show high numbers of papers and citations**

Are they really better scientists than chemists?

**Discussion desirable**
Example 2: Busy (flying) professors

Busy professors do not read carefully enough manuscripts by their students.
Sloppy texts must be revised by reviewers and editors.

Clear misconduct

Who should initiate improvement and how?
Discussion desirable

Example 3: Unaware (honorary) authors
Giving the name of a person as co-author without requesting his/her consent
The unaware author may not feel happy seeing his/her name associated with a mediocre paper

Relatively harmless insult

Recent serious case of misconduct
> Clinical trial without approval from authorities
> Patients not informed
> Poor study design
> Forged results
> Co-authorship without consent

Free reviews
Responsible reviewer:
  one review = one-day work

Most reviewers’ feeling – service to research community

Fair with non-profit publishers
Most publishers – for-profit organisations

Making profit from unpaid reviewers

Is it fair?

The question invites discussion

Conclusions

> Misconduct in research is a matter of concern

> Misconduct occurs (much) more frequently in politics, media, business, sports, etc.

Thank you for your kind attention