

SELF-ASSESSMENT TASKS



You are the supervisor of two master's students who are doing scientific work on the same topic, working together and using a shared experimental setup for their research. A mandatory condition for admission to the master's thesis defense is the publication of a scientific article. One of the master's students, after conducting the experiment, approached you with the results of the statistical processing of the experiment and proposed to publish the article together, because he was the first to do the work for himself and the other master's student, and does not want his work to be used by the other student. What will your actions be and what will you advise this master's student?

For notes:





Author group A deposited a preprint onto a preprint server and simultaneously submitted the manuscript to journal A. Peer review in journal A took some considerable time, but the paper (paper A) was eventually published. During the long peer review of paper A, author group A noticed that another set of authors, author group B, had published paper B in journal B. While paper B was submitted several weeks after paper A (and after the preprint appeared), peer review in journal B was somewhat faster, and so paper B was published before paper A. Author group A suspect that some of the data and language in paper B was taken from their preprint, and that author group B had used this to "scoop" paper A. A citation to the preprint was given in paper B but author group A felt that this was only to guard author group B against accusations of plagiarism, and certainly did not assign full credit to their original discoveries.

Author group A feels like author group B took advantage of some key results in their preprint to accelerate some major points in paper B. Unfortunately, author group A did not raise this with journal B. Journal B has only found out about this through word of mouth. Journal B does not know exactly which paper they refer to.

<https://publicationethics.org/case/preprint-plagiarism>

For notes:





We received an email from a whistleblower notifying us about possible plagiarism in two chapters published by us, both authored by the same two authors. The whistleblower accused the authors of substantial plagiarism. In both chapters there were, indeed, certain unattributed parts of the text, although the majority was properly attributed. Some of the unattributed parts were authored by the authors themselves, while some were taken from third parties. The whistleblower highlighted some properly cited parts of the text, as he claimed they were directly copied from other sources. As a first step we contacted both authors for an explanation. The authors admitted their mistakes but also explained that they did not have any malevolent intention, and that it was a simple oversight on their behalf. They explained that they were willing to correct (publish a correction of) their chapter. We then contacted the editor of the book. In his opinion this was not a case of substantial plagiarism and suggested publishing a correction. The whistleblower was not satisfied with the opinion of the editor.

Is this misconduct serious enough to warrant a retraction, or would it be sufficient to publish a correction?

<https://www.biochemia-medica.com/en/journal/23/3/10.11613/BM.2013.030>

For notes:





Your supervisor and his colleague from another university have been working on the same research topic for years and they are the most recognized specialists in your narrow field of study. They often receive offers to review each other's papers from various journals. However, they never disclose their good relationship and give each other's articles positive review reports every time. What should you do, when you become aware of such situation?

For notes:



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Your supervisor is a head of your department and is engaged both in research and administrative work in the university. He is busy all the time and his schedule is always tight. Being a prominent specialist in your topic, he sometimes receives review offers but he has no time to review the articles. So, he asks you to perform a review on his behalf and give him a project of a review report which he will then submit with minor changes. What should you do?

For notes:





As a result of the research report inspection, the similarity coefficients are very high. Need to start reworking right away?

For notes:



A large, empty rectangular area with rounded corners, outlined in blue, intended for taking notes.



The similarity report shows borrowings from our previous work on the same subject. This is our material: can it be used in a literature review?

For notes:



A large blue rounded rectangle with a hand holding a pen at the top right corner, intended for taking notes.



The description of research methods and techniques in my work is completely similar to previous works. Is this allowed?

For notes:



A large, empty rectangular area with rounded corners, outlined in blue, intended for taking notes.



A group of authors presented preliminary results of a pilot study in the form of a short communication in one journal. Two years later, the same group of authors published an article based on a much bigger sample in the same journal. They referred to the short communication published earlier and readily presented their results which supported the hypothesis based on the pilot study.

Should this be considered as a salami publishing?

<https://www.biochemia-medica.com/en/journal/23/3/10.11613/BM.2013.030>

For notes:





A group of authors published the results of a new biomarker used in the evaluation of inflammatory bowel disease therapy. Institute's ethical committee approved the study and all patients gave informed consent to participate in the study. The sample size was small, so the authors correctly chose nonparametric statistical tests. The study revealed some interesting results worthy of further follow up. Several years later the same group of authors reported results on the same hypothesis but with a different outcome and with no cross reference to the earlier publication. The studied patient population was much bigger, so they used appropriate parametric statistics and, in the end, gained a different study outcome. Are there any grounds for suspecting salami publication?

<https://www.biochemia-medica.com/en/journal/23/3/10.11613/BM.2013.030>

For notes:





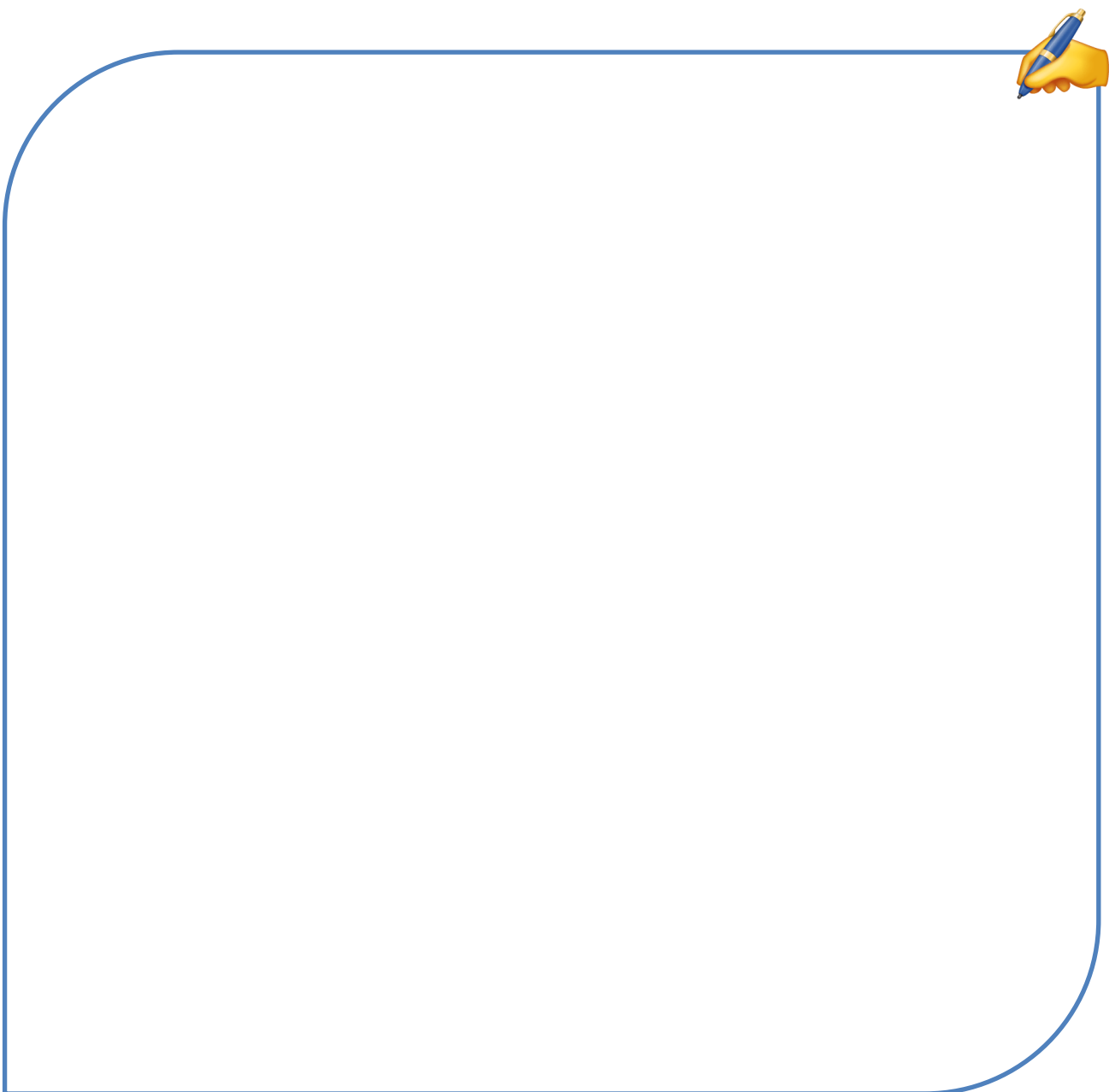
A prospective study comprised of determination of C-reactive protein (CRP), procalcitonin (PCT) and serum amyloid A (SAA) in renal cancer patients. There were two groups, patients with metastatic renal cancer and patients with localized renal cancer. Within a short period of time, two articles with similar titles were published with no cross reference to each other. One article presented the use of CRP and PCT for differentiation of renal cancer stages. The other article assessed the difference of CRP and SAA between patients with metastatic and localized renal cancer. The size of the patient sample with metastatic renal cancer was different in those studies but the sample size of patients with localized renal cancer was the same and with the same demographic characteristics. Articles shared the same three authors. Could these articles be suspected of salami publication?

For notes:



? In **Contributions** section of the article, it is noted that author A collected data for processing and formed a draft of the article, author B proposed a method of analysis and interpretation of the results. Are they considered the authors of the article?

For notes:





A newly relaunched open access, peer reviewed journal operates a double-blind peer-review system. At all stages of the review, until the decision to accept has been taken, neither the author nor the reviewer can identify the other. The journal always uses at least two reviewers, who are also unaware of the identity of each other. After the author has been told that the article is accepted, it may require some final proofreading (eg, footnote cross references, typos, etc). It is easier to do final checks on copies that include the author details. No further decisions as to whether to publish are taken at this stage. However, the reviewers are given the choice as to whether to review a re-submission at any stage, including after acceptance. Also, some individuals who had acted as reviewers at earlier stages, agree to help with these final checks, and are no longer acting as reviewers, but as copyeditors.

Does having the author details on the final copies, that may be seen by the reviewers, breach the double-blind system?

Is it acceptable practice for reviewers to help with final checks (eg, grammar, accuracy of footnotes, etc) after acceptance (in effect, acting as copyeditors)?

<https://publicationethics.org/case/author-anonymity-final-proofreading-stages>

For notes:





A journal operated double blind peer-review, so the reviewers do not know the identity of the authors, and vice versa. However, the anonymity of the authors is not guaranteed, as the reviewers may discover the identity of the authors (because of the area of research, references, writing style, etc). But rarely can the authors identify the reviewers. The journal received a request from a reviewer to share a post on twitter, which may disclose the reviewer's identity to the authors.

Does the double-blind peer-review process apply after publication?

What should be the position of a journal when reviewers ask to share their report or experience on social media?

<https://publicationethics.org/case/sharing-reviewer-social-media>

For notes:





The author was asked to revise and resubmit the paper to address these and other reviewers' suggestions. The author, unaware of the reviewer's identity, subsequently approached the reviewer as a respected colleague at a professional meeting to discuss the manuscript revision. During this conversation, to avoid having to pretend to go over their own suggestions as if they were from someone else, the reviewer disclosed that they were one of the reviewers. The author and reviewer discussed how to improve the manuscript, and at this point, the reviewer offered to assist with new statistical analyses they had recommended and become a co-author, which was agreeable to the author. Before proceeding, the reviewer disclosed this interaction and her intention to the journal editors and the associate editor handling the paper.

<https://publicationethics.org/case/peer-reviewer-contacted-author>

For notes:





The journal operates a double-blind peer review system. Because the journal is small, it does not use a platform for reviews, so reviewers are sent a Word document containing the manuscript and an evaluation form to complete, in which they can leave their comments. However, some reviewers choose to comment directly on the Word document. Most of these comments are anonymized by appearing as user1 or some other nickname. However, sometimes a reviewer will comment using their real name. Typically, the editor must edit each comment and re-do these to remove the reviewer's name and avoid revealing their identity. However, is the reviewer implicitly deciding to reveal their identity using their real name when commenting? It takes a long time to mask the identity of the reviewer, as each comment must be deleted and redone.

Would it be a breach of contract to send the document with the reviewer's identity revealed to the author?

<https://publicationethics.org/case/reviewers-identity-revealed>

For notes:

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