

The need to uphold the highest standards in academic scholarship, honesty and integrity

The interest in research and publication in medical education is growing. Therefore it is important to ensure that the highest standards of academic scholarship, honesty and integrity are upheld in the community of medical education. Such an approach will foster a climate of mutual trust and encourage the free exchange of ideas. The research community in medical education can benefit from the standards developed in the field of biomedical research on areas such as criteria for authorship and conflict of interest. All persons listed as authors must have made a substantial intellectual contribution to the study. This contribution may be in respect to the concept, development of protocol, collection of data, analysis of data, interpretation of results, conclusions and the preparation of manuscript. Those who have made significant contributions while not fulfilling the criteria to justify authorship may be listed in the acknowledgment section. To an extent, the credibility of a journal depends on how conflicts of interest are handled. The authors have a responsibility to disclose any conflict of interest in connection with the submitted manuscript. All sources of funding for the work, personal connections, and institutional affiliations of the authors should be acknowledged. It has to be noted that financial relationships and their effects are less easily detected than other forms of conflicts of interest. It is vital that all ideas and arguments drawn from the work of others are acknowledged. Omitted or faulty citation can be interpreted as plagiarism. Therefore it is important to ensure that citations are accurate and in accordance with the academic conventions. However, intellectual property is a fluid concept and academic conventions of citation can be extremely complicated. Differentiating what is common knowledge, what is original and what is borrowed can be difficult. Plagiarism can range from imperfect referencing to incorporation of a sentence without acknowledgment to major academic fraud. Ultimately, academic honesty and integrity comes down to trust and respect. Trust follows from academic honesty. Respect for oneself comes from active and honest involvement in the academic process and respect for others means that we value their worth and their work.