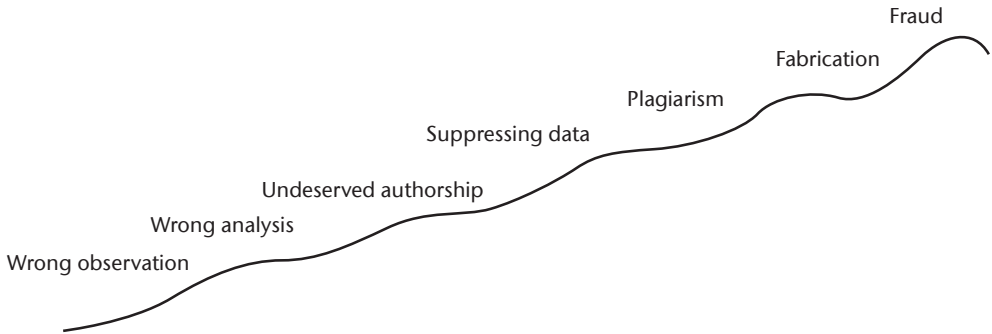


Plagiarism: surely not me?

Plagiarism has received a lot of attention recently but it has been present for centuries. In 1804 Francious Bidault's PhD thesis at the University of Paris was plagiarised from a publication by Thomas Baumes: "Treatise on Icterus or Jaundice of newborn infants"¹.

Now, with the explosion of on-line medical journals, many of these for profit, scientific fraud and plagiarism are proliferating. It is worthwhile to read the article in *Science*² on how easy it is to get scientific fraud published.

Also worthwhile to note how far down the "slippery slope"³ to or high up the highway to fraud, plagiarism falls.



The Highway to Fraud. Adapted from ³.

1 Hansen TWR. Pioneers in the Scientific Study of Neonatal Jaundice and Kernicterus. *Pediatrics* 2000;106(2):1-7

2 Bohanon J. Who is afraid of peer review? *Science* 2013; 342; 60-65.

3 Nylenda M, Simonsen S. Scientific misconduct: a new approach to prevention. *Lancet* 2006; 367:1882-1883.

There are many forms of plagiarism that vary from ghost writing, duplicate publications, intentional copying to scientific fraud.

All of us, when writing our manuscripts and articles, are tempted to perform unintentional plagiarism – especially if we read an excellent article and we ourselves cannot find good words to use to say exactly what another author has written.

Intentional plagiarism is when we copy an idea, statement or a sentence from an article we have not cited. So to prevent plagiarism we need to take note of the available guidelines.

You can prevent plagiarism by:

1. Making sure you have read and abide by the University guidelines on plagiarism (www.sun.ac.za/english/legal/documents/plagiaat_Nov2010_eng.doc)
2. Register for Turnitin on the University website (see appendix 9)
3. Scan your proposal, manuscripts and articles through Turnitin before submission. If you do not scan your article, others will.
4. Cite, cite, cite.

Plagiarism is a very complex subject and every author has a responsibility to ensure that this does not occur. One of the dangers of accepting guest authorship is that you could be found guilty of plagiarism and scientific fraud, as you were not involved in the process of research and writing the article.

Self-plagiarism is a particularly difficult issue. If you are quoting yourself, which you often do in the methods section, you must cite the article.

Gie, R., & Beyers, N. (2014). Getting started in clinical research: Guidance for junior researchers. Cape Town: Department of Paediatrics and Child Health, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Stellenbosch University.