Plagiarism

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It is every where

Scientific fraud: action needed in China

On Dec 19, 2009, editors at Acta Crystallographica Section E alerted the scientific community to a disgraceful pattern of fraud involving papers they had published in 2007. At least 70 false crystal structures were reported, mainly from two groups led by Hua Zhong and Tao Liu, both at Jinggangshan University, Jian, China. All authors have now agreed to retraction of 41 papers published by Zhong and 29 by Liu. It is rather surprising that the wrongdoing on such a scale evaded detection during peer review and, considering that crystal structures are deposited in public databases upon publication, that the truth has been uncovered so slowly.

In China, the government controls almost all funding for research. As in other countries, to gain funding, researchers need to publish as many papers as possible. According to Science Citation Index and other resources, Chinese authors published 271,000 papers in 2008, roughly 11.5% of the world’s total. This incident is not the first time that scientific fraud has occurred in China. Regulations to monitor state-funded research projects were announced in 2006 by the Ministry of Science and Technology, as well as establishing robust and transparent procedures for handling allegations of scientific misconduct to prevent further instances of fraud.

For Hu Jintao’s goal of China becoming a research superpower by 2020 to be credible, China must assume stronger leadership in scientific integrity. ■ The Lancet
It is every where

• People learn by repeating
• People speak using the same words
• People re-use jokes
• All literature exploits a limited number of basic stories (‘‘…substantially all ideas are second-hand, consciously and unconsciously drawn from a million outside sources.’’ M. Twain)
• Concept of plagiarism arose hand in hand with authorship, unfortunately the CONTENT was lost to WORDS

Citation amnesia
Politicians and business people are happy with plagiarism

- If it does not undermine their profits
- If public don’t caught them

J. Baiden, plagiarized as a student (?), plagiarized as a Presidential candidate (idea of speech, not word-by-word!)
Candidate of science, dissertation defended in 1997 г., while being vice-major of S. Petersburg; defended before the Dissertation Council of the Gornii Institute. Later rector of this institute became the chief of the election campaign in S. Petersburg.

Putin accused of plagiarising his PhD thesis

The climax
Vitalii Ginzburg, RAS, Nobel laureate: I do not know details… probably he was cheated. He is clever enough for not doing such things and not understand that it is counterproductive..

Probably he asked … assistant to collect the necessary materials, and did not checked the sources himself, what is not excusable, of course. But I do not believe in the intentional Putin’s plagiate, especially taking his profession into account
218 of 450 chairs in Lower Chamber of Russian “parliament” are occupied by Candidates and Doctors of Science

Internet ads: dozens of offers to prepare and help in preparation of dissertation. The price: $5k - $50k.

The “full service” includes the arrangements of publications and “support” in negotiations with dissertation council (of the university or research center)
Is academy special?

• Academy is more intolerant to plagiarism
Prevalence in dissertations

Chairman of Higher attestation commission

• Up to 1/3 of dissertations are bought for money (2006)
• 1000 dissertations rejected because of plagiarism (2007, it is about 3%)  
• Computer-based check is introduced in 2008
RAS member accused in plagiarism

Vice President RAS, Alexander Nekipelov

RAS ad hoc commission chaired by RAS president found that there was no plagiarism, because many pages of translated text (not marked as quote) were referenced.
Academic “elite”

- Connected to old party and modern state/business elite
- Part of the ‘consumers’ and ‘providers’ of the ‘dissertation services’
- Suppressing the honest criticism of plagiarism

Asim Kurjak, MD, Zagreb medical school

Professional regulation
Role of systematic reviews in detecting plagiarism: case of Asim Kurjak
Iain Chalmers

Plagiarism is difficult to detect, especially if it occurs in journals with a small readership. Systematic reviews can help to identify cases, but as this case shows, unless perpetrators face greater sanctions the problem is unlikely to go away.
Principled actions against plagiarizer

• Dangerous
• Probably influential

Ana Marushich, Matko Marushich
Editors, Croatian Medical Journal
Is plagiarism understood in Russia?

- There are cases of persecution
- Terminology is stable
- But it is not in the agenda
  - In MEDLINE - 2 records in Russian
  - After 2000 only one record

But: 2 300 000 Russian in Google during last year
(OK, >1/2 is about music/movies)
Infrastructure?

No one state or funding body, no academy/society has an entity for management of cases of research misconduct

Only in 2009 Moscow State University introduced the Code of Ethics naming plagiarism a misconduct
Place for optimism?

• Russian plagiarism-search engines are developed
• Professors in universities employ plagiarism-finding services and thus students learn about plagiarism
• Students struggling against notorious dean in Moscow University did spot his plagiarism