



Letter to the Editor

Self-plagiarism: An ethical problem



Dear Editor,

We read the publication on “Self-plagiarism is not easily defined, but should be avoided” with a great interest [1]. We agree that self-plagiarism is hard to detect. Nevertheless, this unethical practice is usually intended by the plagiarist if it is not an accidental duplication by the error in journal publication process. Several forms of self-plagiarism such as figure duplication with different headings (see a good example in *Arch Gynecol Obstet.* 271: 259-61 and *Southeast Asian J Trop Med Public Health.* 37:1021-4 [2]) or part of Table duplication (see example in *Eur J Cancer Prev.* 2018 27(2):118 to 123 and *Asian Pac J Cancer Prev.* 17(7):3391 to 4.) might be difficult to observe. It is no doubt that self-plagiarism should be avoided. However, the great consideration is on the proper management of the detected problem. Some institutes might neglect to manage the problem when there is a report on unethical practice by the journal [2]. In addition, the journal sometimes neglects to properly manage the detected problem. A serious problem is usually observed in case of open-access paid publication. The withdrawal of the unethical practice from the website is extremely rare,

and this is still the important ethical issue to be managed by our medical society.

References

1. MacDermid JC. Self-plagiarism is not easily defined, but should be avoided. *J Hand Ther.* 2018;31(4):427–428.
2. Wiwanitkit V. Plagiarism, management, journal retraction and response by author's institute. *Saudi J Anaesth.* 2013;7(2):223.

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Conflict of interest: None. Editor's Response: I thank Dr Yasri for raising additional points about the darker side of plagiarism in reference to predatory journals. I did not address predatory journals in my editorial, so these comments extend my focus. I agree predatory journals have many serious issues including less attention to academic misconduct. The *Journal of Hand Therapy* takes academic misconduct very seriously. The editorial was to help well-intended authors navigate the topic, especially as we move to greater publication of protocols and reporting guidelines to be sure that information is consistent when need be, but not duplicated. Discourse on academic integrity and best practices is important, and so your points are appreciated.