

Duplicate publication



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Duplicate publication distorts the available literature, as it may exaggerate the prevalence of a disease or the response to therapy by counting the same patient multiple times. Authors should never submit the same paper to multiple journals simultaneously to avoid duplicate publication and should refrain from reporting the same dataset more than once.^{1,2}

Salami slicing is publication of many articles from the same set of data. Salami slicing may exaggerate results or produce skewed results based on post hoc analyses not intended in the original study design. A *P* value of .05 suggests a 1 in 20 chance of the same or more extreme results if the null hypothesis is true, and multiple post-hoc subset analyses can easily result in false conclusions. The old quip is that “if you torture your data long enough, you can make it say what you want.” Investigators should accept the outcome of each study, even if it contradicts the original hypothesis.

While duplicate publication of datasets is inappropriate, it may be perfectly appropriate to discuss findings at a scientific meeting before publication of an article. It should also be noted that publication of the full report after publication of a nonembargoed abstract or poster displayed at a professional meeting (or after a press report of the meeting) does **NOT** constitute duplicate publication. It may also be appropriate to report certain results to governmental agencies or manufacturers when patient safety is at stake, and this does not preclude subsequent publication of the full manuscript.^{3,4}

Authors of review articles are frequently asked to cover similar topics in articles meant for different audiences, and this is perfectly acceptable. However, they should never plagiarize another author’s work

or cut and paste portions of previously submitted articles (self-plagiarism).

Consensus statements, guidelines, appropriate use criteria, and some editorials may be appropriate for wide dissemination and may be legitimately copublished or jointly published by multiple journals, with the consent of each editor and conforming to established procedures. This is appropriate when the published work is of high impact and should be directed to multiple audiences. Such articles should be appropriately cross-referenced in a footnote and in PubMed to avoid duplicate citations. Similarly, errors in published articles that require the publication of a correction of part of the work should include the complete original citation to avoid double counting.

A unique situation arises when coinvestigators disagree on the interpretation of data from a study. Such differences are best resolved by consensus or by an accompanying editorial to prevent duplicate or contradictory citations of the work in question. Publication of a single dataset with different interpretations is rarely legitimate and should be clearly cross-referenced when it occurs.

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