

**Letter to Editor**

**RESEARCH MISCONDUCT**

**Dr. B. Senthil Kumar**

*Research Co-Ordinator, Head - Central Research Laboratory for Biomedical Research,  
Vinayaka Mission's Kirupananda Variyar Medical College & Hospital, Vinayaka Missions  
Research Foundation (Deemed to be University), Salem – 636308.*

**Corresponding Author:** Dr. B. Senthil Kumar, Assistant Professor, Department of Anatomy,  
Vinayaka Missions Kirupananda Variyar Medical College and Hospital, Salem, TamilNadu.

**Phone No:** 9894398677 **Email ID:** skdrchinu88@gmail.com

**DOI:** <https://dx.doi.org/10.31975/NJBMS.2020.11201>

Research misconduct is essentially defined as: “fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results. In the best interests of science, the work has to be carried out honestly and objectively without bias and the result should be reported truthfully. However, deviations from the ideal, willful, or otherwise, constitute what is known as scientific misconduct<sup>1</sup>.

It includes:

- Fabrication is making up data or result and recording or reporting them;
- Falsification is manipulating research materials, equipment, or process, or changing of omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record;
- Plagiarism is the appropriation of another person’s idea, process, result, or words without giving appropriate credit<sup>2</sup>.

**Taxonomy of Research Misconduct<sup>3</sup>:**

- ❖ Fabrication
- ❖ Falsification

- ❖ Plagiarism
- ❖ Failure to get ethical approval
- ❖ Not admitting that some data are missing
- ❖ Ignoring outliers without declaring it
- ❖ Not including data on side effects in a clinical trial
- ❖ Conducting research on human without informed consent
- ❖ Publication of post hoc analysis without declaring it
- ❖ Gift authorship
- ❖ Not attributing other authors
- ❖ Redundant publication
- ❖ Not disclosing a conflict of interest (COI)
- ❖ Not attempting to publish completed research
- ❖ Failure to do an adequate search of existing research before beginning new research.

**What Drives People to Commit Research Misconduct? <sup>4</sup>**

Research misconduct is never justified, but it is important to recognize potential drives of misconduct to better understand how it might be prevented.

**1. Inadequate Training**

“After two years of a postdoctoral fellowship... I still don't know how to properly publish my data”.

**2. Poor Supervision**

“I was scared to go to my guide. He used to scream & yell at me when things did not work as planned”.

**3. Competitive Pressures**

“I felt it was necessary to get a paper in a high-profile journal in order to get a faculty position”

**4. Personal Circumstances**

“I had been applying for a green card and felt pressured to make a good paper and get good publications”

**5. Individual Psychology**

“Half of me wanted to make (my Guide) the other half was terrified of failing... so I fabricated a piece of data”.

Seek support from a mentor if stressors are impacting your work.

**REFERENCE:**

1. Handa S. Plagiarism and Publication ethics: Dos and don'ts. Indian J Dermatol Venereol Leprol 2008;74:301-3.
2. Satyanarayana k. Plagiarism: A scourge afflicting the Indian science. Indian J Med Res 2010;131:373-6.
3. White C. The COPE Report, 2000. Annual Report of the Committee on Publication Ethics; 2000.
4. Sarwar U, Nicolaou M. Fraud and deceit in medical research. J Res Med Sci 2012;17:1077-81.