Letter to Editor

Plagiarism: An academic theft

Sir,

I have read the editorial note titled 'Plagiarism: an editor's concern' by Dr Javed Ali and found it a bold and great decision by IJPI. Plagiarism is a serious contravention in modern age academic writing and research and has turned into a serious problem. Though there is no absolute definition for plagiarism, according to James M Nugent 'Plagiarism, like shoplifting and smoking marijuana, is wrong, and it is a corruption of academic life, and we should do what we can to end it.'[1] However, we must differentiate between similarity index and plagiarism. Most of the software like iThenticate (http://www.ithenticate.com), Viper (http://www.scanmyessay.com/plagiarism-free-software), Turnitin (https://turnitin.com/static/index) available for detecting plagiarism do not actually detect plagiarism rather detect similarity index. Similarity index is the reflection of the total percentage of matched words that a system finds for a submission.[2] Similarity index also detects some very common word like E-mail IDs, phone numbers, address of academic affiliation etc., even if appeared in an article by the same authors.

SUGGESTION

1. Teaching and learning sessions for researchers and academia

should arrange by the higher education commissions in the respective countries so as to prevent both intentional and unintentional plagiarism as described by Dr. Javed Ali in his editorial note.
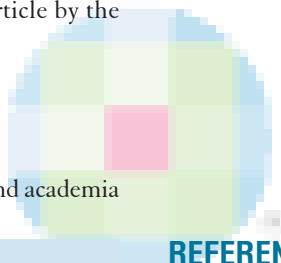2. Research journals must adopt strict rules like *IJPI*.[3]
3. The higher education institutions should provide books and handovers in their libraries to the students especially to researchers on plagiarism. Some very informative books on plagiarism are
4. A Handbook for Deterring Plagiarism in Higher Education by J Carroll published by Oxford
5. Brookes University)
6. Plagiarism, Detection and Prevention by G Chester published by Joint Information Systems Committee United Kingdom.

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2. Available from: https://www.turnitin.com/static/helpCenter/viewing_the_overall_similarity_index.php [Last accessed on 2011 Nov 19].
3. Ali J. Plagiarism: An editor's concern. Int J Pharma Investig 2011;1:129-30.