SE08: Ethics in scientific publishing

Plagiarism and copyright

Jean-Marc Fritschy
co-editor in chief, EJN
Contents

• Definition of plagiarism includes text, figures and ideas
• Self-plagiarism: what is acceptable?
• How is plagiarism detected and how is it dealt with?
• Copyright: what are you allowed to do with your published articles?

As recommended by the guidelines of COPE (committee on publication ethics; www.publicationethics.org)
Definition of plagiarism

Use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work (Random House Compact Unabridged Dictionary)

Author responsibility:
To give due recognition to published work relating to their submitted manuscript by way of correct reference and citation. All sources should be disclosed, and if a significant amount of other people's material is to be used, permission must be sought by the author in accordance with copyright law.

(Ethical Guidelines for Publication; European Association for Chemical and Molecular Sciences)
A Placebo-Controlled Study of Guanfacine in the Treatment of Children With Tic Disorders and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Larry Scahill, M.S.N., Ph.D.
Phillip B. Chappell, M.D.
Young S. Kim, M.D.
Robert T. Schultz, Ph.D.
Lily Katsovich, M.S.
Elizabeth Shepherd, M.A.
Amy F.T. Arnsten, Ph.D.
Donald J. Cohen, M.D.
James F. Leckman, M.D.

Objective: This study evaluated the efficacy and safety of guanfacine in treating children with tic disorders and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Method: Subjects from a specialty tic disorders clinic were randomly assigned to receive 8 weeks of treatment with guanfacine or placebo under double-blind conditions. Follow-up visits occurred every 2 weeks for safety monitoring and dose adjustment.

Results: Thirty-four medication-free subjects (31 boys and three girls with a mean age of 10.4 years) with ADHD, combined type, and a tic disorder participated. After 8 weeks of treatment, guanfacine was associated with a mean improvement of 37% in the total score on the teacher-rated ADHD Rating Scale, compared to 8% improvement for placebo. Nine of 17 subjects who received guanfacine were blindly rated on the Clinical Global Improvement scale as either much improved or very much improved, compared with none of 17 subjects who received placebo. The mean score on the parent-rated hyperactivity index improved by 27% in the guanfacine group and 21% in the placebo group, not a significant difference. On the Continuous Performance Test, commission errors decreased by 22% and omission errors by 17% in the guanfacine group, compared with increases of 29% in commission errors and of 31% in omission errors in the placebo group. Tic severity decreased by 31% in the guanfacine group, compared to 0% in the placebo group. One guanfacine subject with sedation withdrew at week 4. Guanfacine was associated with insignificant decreases in blood pressure and pulse.

Conclusions: Guanfacine appears to be a safe and effective treatment for children with tic disorders and ADHD.
A placebo-controlled study of lofexidine in the treatment of children with tic disorders and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

Helmut Niederhofer, Wolfgang Staffen and Alois Mair
Christian Doppler Klinik, Department of Neurology, Salzburg, Austria.

This study evaluated the efficacy and safety of Lofexidine in treating children with tic disorders and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Subjects from a specialty tic disorders clinic were randomly assigned to receive 8 weeks of treatment with lofexidine or placebo under double-blind conditions. Follow-up visits occurred every 2 weeks for safety monitoring and dose adjustment. Forty-four medication-free subjects (41 boys and three girls; mean age of 10.4 years) with ADHD, combined type, and a tic disorder participated. After 8 weeks of treatment, lofexidine was associated with a mean improvement of 41% in the total score on the teacher-rated ADHD Rating Scale compared to 7% improvement for placebo. Eleven of 22 subjects who received lofexidine were blindly rated on the Clinical Global Scale-Improvement as either much improved or very much improved compared to none of 22 subjects who received placebo. The mean score on the parent-rated hyperactivity index improved by 29% in the lofexidine group and 18% in the placebo group, which was not a significant difference. On the Continuous Performance Test, commission errors decreased by 25% and omission errors by 20% in the lofexidine group, compared with increases of 33% in commission errors and of 36% in omission errors in the placebo group. Tic severity decreased by 27% in the lofexidine group, compared to 0% in the placebo group. One lofexidine subject with sedation withdrew at week 4. Lofexidine was associated with insignificant decreases in blood pressure and pulse. Lofexidine appears to be a safe and effective treatment for children with tic disorders and ADHD.

Article retracted in 2004, but still available in Pubmed
Self-plagiarism

What is allowed?

- Standard description of experimental procedures and routine statements

- Re-use of materials, experimental results, etc, is acceptable only upon explicit cross-referencing of the publication where they were reported previously

  This is particularly important when the first description is not yet published
How is plagiarism detected?

• Reviewers and/or readers familiar with the field and the author’s work
• Abrupt changes of style within the manuscript
• Routine screening with internet search engines
• Plagiarism detection software
Prevention

- Author guidelines should contain definition of plagiarism and journal policy about it (in particular, the policy about re-using data published elsewhere).
- All materials obtained by authors from published data need a clear indication that the copyright has been lifted.
- Cover letter needs to state explicitly that the data is novel and has not been published elsewhere, and that all co-authors have read and approved the manuscript submitted for publication.
- Education about publication ethics at undergraduate and graduate levels.
What can editors do?

• Editors have a duty to act if they suspect misconduct and are ethically bound to maintain the integrity of the academic record

• Protect authors of plagiarised articles

• Obtain an explanation

• Publish correction, consider retraction

• Consider informing responsible authorities of author
Action in a clear case of plagiarism

e.g., unattributed use of large sections of text and/or data, presented as if they were by the plagiarist

Unless a satisfactory explanation is provided:

• Retraction
• Information of author’s employer
Action in case of minor plagiarism

- e.g., copying of short phrases only (introduction, discussion); no data attribution

- Require correction, citation of sources
- Publish correction
Action in case of data redundancy

Duplication of text published by the author (e.g., simultaneous submission of similar manuscripts to different journals)

• Editor’s action depends on amount and degree of severity

• Retraction, publish correction
Copyright (non-open access)

What is allowed with your published article?

• reuse in a new publication of which you are author, editor or co-editor (with the usual acknowledgements).
• with appropriate acknowledgement to the Journal, the Publisher and the owner, and full bibliographic reference, you may use the accepted version of the article as originally submitted for publication to:
  – share print or electronic copies with colleagues;
  – use all or part of the article and abstract, without revision or modification, in personal compilations or other publications of your own work;
  – use the article within your employer’s institution or company for educational or research purposes;
• 12 months after publication you may post an electronic version of the article on your own personal website, on your employer’s website/repository and on free public servers in your subject area.

What is not allowed:

• resell or reproduce any part of it for commercial purposes
• post the Publisher’s PDF version of the article online.

(adapted from Wiley-Blackwell exclusive license form)