

Avoid Duplicate Publications

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Duplicate publication ‘refers to the practice of submitting a paper with identical or near-identical content to more than one journal, without alerting the editors or readers to the existence of its earlier published version.’ [1] Duplicate publication, also termed ‘self-plagiarism’, is largely driven by the prevailing academic ‘publish-or-perish’ culture. [2]

Salami publication (also called ‘segmented publication’) is another form of redundant publication where multiple articles are derived from the same study. Although there is no overlap in the text, it is characterised by a similarity in hypothesis, methodology, or results. [3]

Why is it relevant?

The practice of duplicate and salami publications has several negative effects. It may breach international copyright laws and waste publication resources through inefficient use. The redundant publication of original data is also problematic as it may lead to the overweighting of the results of a single study from the double-counting of data.

[4] Finally, salami publications are unprofessional and artificially enlarge an author’s scientific work, providing undeserved benefit. [5]

Practical Steps

1. All results derived from a single study should be reported within one article.
2. Manuscripts containing identical or substantially similar content should be submitted to only one journal at a time and published once. However, this requirement may vary across disciplines and countries. Authors are therefore, advised to carefully check the target journal’s guidelines prior to submission.
3. The rule against duplicate publication does not apply to the publication of complete reports that follow a preliminary report, such as a letter to the editor or an abstract presented at a scientific meeting. [6]
4. The submission of the same paper to multiple journals for secondary publication may be beneficial for the purposes of reaching a larger audience (e.g., in a different language or an abridged version). If secondary publication is to take

place, then there must be agreement between the editors of both journals (e.g., with respect to copyright) and the duplicate nature of the publication must be clearly indicated in the title and with a reference to the primary publication. [7]

5. Follow any additional requirements contained within the journal's policy on redundant/duplication publication. [8]
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Case Study

A scientist from Swinburne University had dozens of his papers retracted over concerns about duplication of data. The alleged misconduct was reported by a whistle blower in the same research area who was concerned about the level of duplication, as well as falsification, plagiarism and ghost authorship. The University conducted an internal investigation into this alleged research misconduct, and the scientist lost his job. [9]

References

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