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## Editorial

### Academic Dignity and Organizational Prestige Versus Publication Ethics

Science is mankind's heritage and although it is true that scientists have a nationality, knowledge may not be limited to borders and geographical boundaries. Two main ethical issues should be considered with respect to the publication of any new scientific finding. The first being that any new scientific finding is considered as humankind's heritage and this right cannot be deprived of any nation or race. Secondly, as knowledge has no nationality and is a universal matter, therefore it must not be limited to any kind of geographical, cultural or national boundary or border. But the fact remains that this ethical viewpoint is often neglected within the academic system known to us in many settings. Most unfortunately, checking the published material from countries in which academic staff are obliged to prove being a scientist just by publishing, we often witness traces of data fabrication, falsification, ghost and guest authorship, gift authorship, inadequate data presentation, mis-conduction, redundant publication, plagiarism and so on. Another aspect is that in many countries such as Iran, universities are competing for starting new journals but, instead of being affiliated with a scientific journal run by a scientific society or international publisher, they want to be the owner, publisher and the whole decision maker of the journal themselves. This process guarantees a power for the chancellor to choose or disapprove the chief editor as he/she

desires, the process which affects the autonomy of the scientific journals. Actually, the process is more complex. The method of choosing the editor in chief of scientific journals, the combination of the journal's writers and editorial board members, the redactors' and writers' unfamiliarity with such topics as scientometric and publication ethics, regarding the post of redaction as a class b job, peer review methods, the reviewers' unfamiliarity with the elements of peer review, the nonexistence of a national code of publication ethics in-force in some universities and also the fact that people with no sound background or professional expertise within the field of medical ethics may be in charge of professional ethical posts has created a very tabulated and lawless atmosphere within the field of publication ethics. Needless to mention is the fact that intellectual property and copyright issues are severely undermined within these countries which in turn adds to the complexity of the problem.

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