Plagiarism and copyright: Guidance for authors and organizers submitting to supplements

The aim of this guide is to improve transparency, so that the editorial staff (and subsequently readers) can easily establish what is new and original, and what is drawn from previous works of others or the authors.

- 1) Plagiarism covers the use of ideas that have been presented in prior work, regardless of whether the ideas are expressed using the same words, tables or graphics, and presenting it as original without proper citation. Plagiarism is a form of publication misconduct. BioMed Central is a member of <u>CrossCheck's</u> plagiarism detection initiative and takes seriously all cases of publication misconduct.
- 2) Previously published work means all material formally published in a journal, book or in any other citable form, including full articles published in conference proceedings. This does not include material available on pre-print servers or services like <u>figshare</u>. In some cases, proceedings collections may not qualify as 'citable forms' of publication (eg where a conference or society hosts articles online but copyright remains with the author(s) and no DOI (digital object identifier) or formal citation line has been applied). Please let BioMed Central know of such cases so that we can establish whether the prior publication falls under our definition of a citable format. For more information please see BioMed Central Editorial Policies, especially the section on <u>Duplicate Publication</u>. BioMed Central endorses the policies of the ICMJE in relation to overlapping publications.
- 3) Reproduction of work by other authors. Manuscripts must clearly identify any quotations (i.e. word-for-word reproduction) of work by others. Brief sections a few words, one or two sentences, or a longer section such as a paragraph may be included as quotes. The quoted sections must be followed by a citation. Extensive copying of the work of others, even if clearly indicated, is not permitted.
- 4) Reproduction of one's own work. Word-for-word copying of one's own previous work is referred to as 'text recycling' or 'self-plagiarism'. Extensive copying of one's own previous work should be avoided. There may be circumstances where it is unavoidable, e.g. when describing a previously used method. In such cases it must be clearly indicated in the new manuscript. In addition, the author must obtain permission from the holder of copyright of the previous work.
- 5) **Transparency.** When any part of a manuscript is based heavily on a previously published work, authors must inform the editors and reviewers, even if the previously published work was written by one or more of the same authors. Authors must not only cite the previous publication (which may be their own) but also include a statement in the new article to indicate to what extent the new manuscript depends on the original work.

The following statements may be useful when preparing your article:

- a) "This section is reproduced from section X of Author1 and Author2 [ref]" (where Author1 and Author2 are included co-authors of the new manuscript paper.)
- b) If there is no significant copying, but results are based on material presented in another paper: "This section is based on section X of Author1 and Author2 [ref]."
- c) If the new manuscript is based on your previously published article (e.g. an abridged article, or an extended abstract):

"An earlier version of this article was published for the [conference] held on [date]. [reference to the original paper in the list of references]. The sections on [...] and [...] were originally published in the conference article. This article adds results [ideas, analysis, improvements,] in sections [...]."

This does not apply to previous documents such as manuscripts deposited on pre-print servers, working papers and theses, etc.

6) Copyright

Works subject to copyright include creative works in a wide variety of formats – e.g. electronic, print, digital, audio, video, etc. Copyright holders generally own the right to reproduce a published work (unless a more extensive license - such as an open access license - is in place). Where an author has transferred copyright to another party (such as a publisher), they must obtain permission from the copyright holder if they are reusing previously published work - even if properly cited, and even if it is the author's own work. The extent to which this applies depends on the terms of the copyright holder.

Copyright is indicated by a line such as "© [Year] [Author name or publisher].

"Fair use" policies exist for authors reusing their own work under certain circumstances (teaching, research, discussion, etc), but are generally not applicable in the context of publication of subsequent articles. The original copyrighted work must be cited where it is reused.

The author is responsible for ensuring that the proper permissions are obtained as appropriate.

If you are in doubt, or have questions about a special situation, please contact the Supplements office (<u>supplements@biomedcentral.com</u>) with an explanation of the issue.