Retraction of Redundant Publication


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DOI 10.3174/ajnr.A0775

Reply:

Byung Ihn Choi, president of The Korean Radiologic Society, reported that members of the Ethical Committee on Publication of that group believe our 2 papers belong in the category of redundant publication.

We don’t agree with them. It is obvious fact that those 2 papers are entirely different. Let me explain the differences between the first paper (published in KJR) and second paper (published in AJNR).

1) The hypotheses certainly are different. In the first paper, the purpose of the study was to validate the premise that snorers may have a smaller oropharyngeal airway area in relation to increased fat infiltration and an elevated body mass index. Because no statistically significant difference was found between snorers and control subjects in terms of total subcutaneous fat width and total parapharyngeal fat pad thickness, we speculated that the oropharyngeal wall muscles may be the cause of narrowing. Therefore, we planned a new study measuring oropharyngeal diameters [not oropharyngeal area] and pharyngeal walls and changes in these values to understand which parameters might be the cause of snoring.) In the second study, results showed that the lateral pharyngeal wall in snorers were thinner than in control subjects at the largest phase, whereas they become larger at the end of the expirium, the narrowest phase of respiration. The changes of thickness of the lateral pharyngeal wall between the beginning and the end of expirium in snorers (4.14 mm) were significantly higher than the changes in control subjects (0.66 mm). In that study, changes in the thickness of the lateral pharyngeal wall were significantly related to airway diameter in snorers.

For the second study, we used the CT images obtained from the patients in the first study. We didn’t use new study or control groups for 2 reasons. First, to keep out the radiation effects, and second, we thought that if the first study was the basis for the second study, it would be more valuable and reliable.

In conclusion, although the CT scan data obtained from the same patients were used in both papers, we designed the new study (different hypothesis, different measurement parameters, different results, and entirely different discussion) and submitted it to AJNR in November 2003.

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DOI 10.3174/ajnr.A0776

Editor’s Comment: On Redundant and Duplicate Articles

The availability of large electronic data bases and our ease in querying them makes recognition of redundant and duplicate publications easier. Both are considered to be a type of self-plagiarism. Once an editor recognizes a publication as redundant or duplicate, he or she may choose to inform PubMed with or without warning the author(s). This data base immediately will post a retraction note and a warning indicating the nature of this action. Obviously, this process may have deleterious effects on the reputation of the author(s). If one attempts to open the article published Dr. Aksöz et al in the Korean Journal of Radiology, such a warning appears. The Editor-in-Chief of that journal and members of the Ethical Committee on Publication of its parent organization concluded there are enough similarities between that

Reference


M. Petruzellis
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DOI 10.3174/ajnr.A0731
article and a subsequent one published in AJNR to place both in the category of redundant publication. In his letter, Dr. Akan, the principal author of the AJNR article debates this point of view. What do we mean by redundant and duplicate publication?

Redundant publication: This is also called repetitive publication and refers to publication of copyrighted material that contains additional or new data. Thus, although it is not an exact copy of a previously published article it contains parts of it. After carefully reading the articles in question here, I have concluded that they fall into this category.

Duplicate publication: This refers to publication of identical articles with or without acknowledgment. The publications in question here do not fall into this category though I should mention that the AJNR article does not reference the one that appeared earlier in the Korean Journal of Radiology.

The reasons why redundant and duplicate publication are unethical include: infringement of copyright laws, poor utilization of resources including reviewers’ and editors’ time and journal pages, overemphasizing results, and future interference with meta-analyses. The most common motive behind these types of publications involves academic advancement by apparently increasing productivity.

Occasionally, an editor may choose to accept and publish redundant or duplicate articles. This choice is made only when their message is significantly important and when the authors disclose this fact a priori. In the articles by Drs. Akan and Aksoz, no disclosures were made. The AJNR and its editorial staff take pride in publishing only original, highly scientific articles and will not permit the publication of redundant or duplicate articles.

References

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DOI 10.3174/ajnr.A0777