



## Editorial

# How To Avoid Plagiarism

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This is our third short guide on academic publishing standards. At *Sudan Journal of Medical Sciences (SJMS)*, we occasionally receive manuscripts with significant levels of plagiarized content, reflecting a pervasive trend amongst junior scholars in Sudan to neglect to include the proper acknowledgements for the work they cite. This is as much due to a lack of knowledge and experience as it is due to malicious intent, and this editorial will offer a short guide for junior researchers in Sudan regarding the consequences of plagiarism.

Wilson Mizner once said, “When you steal from one author, it’s plagiarism; if you steal from many, it’s research.” [1]. The simple definition of plagiarism is taking credit for someone else’s work. The World Association of Medical Editors defines plagiarism as “the use of others’ published and unpublished ideas or words (or other intellectual property) without attribution or permission and presenting them as new and original rather than derived from an existing source.” [2]. There are many different types of plagiarism: copying and pasting, rephrasing or changing a few words of the original work, using unpublished work without credit or permission, translation from a different language without proper citation, and idea theft, as well as the emerging practice of salami publication, or publishing multiple papers from larger works.

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## A: What not to do:

1. Plagiarism is the uncited and unacknowledged reuse of another scholar’s work. This includes paraphrasing and the use of data, as well as direct quotations. If paraphrasing content, or using data from an earlier article, remember to cite the original source [3].
2. Ask for permission to use figures and tables and cite them properly. Remember that the violation of authorial rights can have severe legal consequences, in addition to resulting in the retraction of the article.

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3. Also remember to ask for permission when making use of unpublished work and include proper attributions.

## B: Look for guidance and support:

1. Training courses helping with research methodologies and citations are available. Training courses are also available for academic communication, that is, writing skills, correct paraphrasing, and understanding how to present and reference the ideas of others.
2. Ask for support from the wider research community, from colleagues and senior researchers. They can give advice and review articles prior to submission, highlighting any potential issues or concerns.
3. Joining experienced research groups or individual can help early career researchers to gain experience in how to properly research and cite the work of other scholars [4].

## C: Tools that can help:

There are multiple tools and solutions available that can be used to identify potential instances of plagiarism, where work is not properly acknowledged and referenced.

Mark Twain said “How lucky Adam was. He knew when he said a good thing, nobody had said it before.” Original work should always get credit [5].

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