

AVOIDING PLAGIARISM: THE ASSURANCE OF ORIGINAL PUBLICATION

The primary purpose of the Journal is to present new research and information to readers within the public health community and beyond. The intention is to present original work, and ensure that readers are not misled into believing that submissions are original when they are in fact duplications of authors' prior work, or of others' work. The policy therefore is to not publish materials that have been published elsewhere, in print or electronically, except for public health literature presented as being of historical relevance. The Journal recognizes, however, that there are legitimate exceptions to its policy prohibiting duplicate publication, determined by what may or may not constitute original "publication."

Prior publication, for the Journal's purposes, is understood as any ostensibly "original" work submitted by an author who is aware that the essence of this work, or a material component of it, has already been published or is pending publication. This restriction does not preclude limited reliance on previously published work provided that due reference is made to the publication. On submission of their manuscripts, authors (including all coauthors) will be required to verify that their data, analyses, and support of their arguments have not been published and are not under consideration for publication elsewhere, and that any components derived or adapted from prior publications of the authors themselves or of others are adequately acknowledged. Similarly, authors must verify that they have not derived or adapted components of

their submissions from unacknowledged unpublished work of others, such as abstracts of conference presentations, grant applications, or print or electronic submissions.

Work originating in authors' student dissertations or theses, although available in college libraries, will be considered as original, with due acknowledgment. Manuscripts developing authors' own work previously presented only in published abstracts or reports of conference presentations, or in displayed conference posters, will also be deemed original unless the full paper was made public in generally distributed printed or in electronic conference proceedings. Submissions will also be considered from authors who disclose prior publication in a language other than English. The Journal encourages republication of its articles in Spanish, for instance, and reciprocally will accept submissions from authors whose prior publications, translated with the publishers' consent and duly referenced, are not already available to those who read only English.

In case of doubt regarding their conformity with this policy, authors should explain in their cover letters how their submissions satisfy the criterion of originality. For instance, their claim of a novel interpretation of their own or others' published research data should identify the source of prior publication and the nature or extent of the new interpretation. Similarly, authors who invoke their or others' newly published data to confirm or contradict their own previously published theories

or analyses should explain what the new submission adds to or refines in their identified earlier work. Submissions will be cautiously considered when authors explain that the purpose of submission is to present Journal readership with previously published materials, or variants of such materials, of which this readership is unlikely to be aware, or to have convenient access. Authors should then cite the source of prior publication, its targeted readership, and copyright approval of republication.

The Journal's policy is not designed punitively, but to preserve the Journal's and authors' integrity in providing readers with data, analyses, or other materials to which they would not otherwise have practical means of access, and to comply with requirements of the laws of copyright and against misappropriation (theft) of intellectual property.

*Bernard M. Dickens, PhD, LLD
Sofia Gruskin, JD, MIA
Daniel Tarantola, MD*

About the Authors

All of the authors are editors with the *American Journal of Public Health*.

Reprints can be ordered at <http://www.ajph.org> by clicking the "Reprints/Eprints" link.

This editorial was accepted December 17, 2010.

doi:10.2105/AJPH.2010.300114

Contributors

B.M. Dickens wrote the first draft and collected comments from the suggested changes of the two authors and reviewers; all authors approved the final revision.