Description

Scientific misconduct is not only deplorable from a moral standpoint; it can have serious consequences on a researcher's future. At the least a record of misconduct will hang over a researcher like a dark cloud, hampering efforts to fund future work.

But serious misconduct can result in dismissal, jail time, or worse. However, the scientific misconduct case of plagiarism can be avoided by using online plagiarism checker.

Consider the following examples of the consequences of scientific misconduct:

Fired

British physician Andrew Wakefield made a name for himself with a sensational 1998 paper claiming a link between vaccination and autism. As a result of his paper, vaccination rates dropped throughout Great Britain. But Wakefield made even bigger headlines when his paper was found to be largely composed of fabricated data. He was struck of the Medical Register in 2010 and can no longer practice medicine in the United Kingdom.



Joachim Boldt, once an acclaimed colloid researcher in Germany, was stripped of his professorship at the University of Giessen in 2011 after questions arose as to the accuracy of 90 research studies. Several papers have been retracted and Boldt faces criminal charges.

In 2012 Japanese anesthesiology researcher Yoshitaka Fujii was found to have fabricated data and falsely listed coauthors in some 170 articles, beating Boldt's record and setting a new standard of malfeasance. He was dismissed from his position as professor at the Toho University.

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Jailed

Eric Poehlman, an American medical researcher, fabricated data in several papers on hormone therapy and used the fake papers to obtain millions of dollars in funding. Exposed, he faced criminal charges, pled guilty, and in 2006 was sentenced to one year in jail. He was also barred from ever receiving federal grants again.

Killed

In 1926 Austrian biologist Paul Kammerer challenged Darwin's theory of evolution with experiments on toads supporting the rival Lamarckian theory. Counterclaims suggested his toad's supposed acquired characteristics (black foot pads) were fake, produced by injecting black ink. Six weeks after the India ink charge was made, Kammerer committed suicide.

Scientific misconduct examples are not as dramatic as those above but can still have negative effects. Consequences include failure to receive promotions, loss of editorships, drying up of research grants, and reluctance of graduate students to join a research group.

In one case I know of a polymer researcher claimed a breakthrough and used his visibility to secure a higher position at another company. But as years passed it was generally recognized that the researcher had "oversold the curability of his polymers, if not out and out lied about it" in the words of a colleague of mine. The researcher's name became a byword for nonreproducible results, he was shunted to a less responsible position, and he eventually took early retirement.

Justice can come slowly in cases of scientific misconduct, but consequences generally do come.

Category

1. Publishing Research
2. Submitting Manuscripts

Date Created
2016/06/30
Author
editor

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