

Experimental Biology and Medicine's new dual submission policy

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Dual submission is when the same, or an almost identical, manuscript is submitted to more than one journal. If you have a manuscript under consideration by more than one journal at the same time you are guilty of dual submission. The ICMJE Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals states 'When submitting a paper, the author must always make a complete statement to the editor about all submissions and previous reports (including meeting presentations and posting of results in registries) that might be regarded as redundant or duplicate publication.' While not falling under the Office of Research Integrity's definition of scientific misconduct which includes fabrication, falsification and plagiarism, dual submission is outside the accepted norms of researchers and a form of publishing misconduct which falls outside accepted practices of biomedical publication.

Experimental Biology and Medicine (EBM) has recently dealt with a dual submission case which is described below. I was alerted by the Editor-in-Chief of *Experimental Animals*, Hiromichi Yonekawa, PhD and the President of the Japanese Association for Laboratory Animal Science, Ken-ichi Yagami, PhD that an article published in the January 2010 issue of *EBM* had been submitted to their journal. Drs Yonekawa and Yagami expressed concern that this submission was a duplicate submission, which is prohibited under the rules of *Experimental Animals* and *EBM*. I was supplied the manuscript that was submitted to *Experimental Animals* on March 10, 2009 by YL Ding *et al.* entitled 'Glucose intolerance and decreased early insulin response in mice with severe hypertriglyceridemia' and found it to be nearly identical to the manuscript of the same title and authors that we had published in our January 2010 issue (Ding YL, *et al. Exp Biol Med* 2010;235:40–6). This manuscript had been submitted to *EBM* on March 9, 2009, had gone through resubmissions on June 8, 2009 and July 20, 2009 and was accepted for publication on July 25, 2009. The almost identical manuscript was submitted on March 10, 2009 to *Experimental Animals* with revised versions submitted on March 24, 2009, May 9, 2009 and July 9, 2009 after which Dr Yonekawa received no further response from the authors.

During the period of submission and resubmission of this article to *EBM* our Instructions to authors said 'Manuscripts are accepted for review with the understanding that the same work has not been and, if accepted by *EBM*, will not be published elsewhere nor is presently submitted elsewhere; and that its submission for publication has been approved by all of the authors (as confirmed by the covering

letter)... One copy of any material that might be regarded as 'duplicate publication,' such as preliminary reports (including reviews, symposia and proceedings) or other publications (submitted, in press or published) containing data or other material included in the submitted manuscript, must be sent to the Editor when the manuscript is submitted.' By the time this article was resubmitted to *EBM* on June 8, 2009 it was already submitted and resubmitted to *Experimental Animals*.

Between August 12 and August 17, 2009 all of the authors of the article signed and then submitted to *EBM* a mandatory submission form that states under Authorship Responsibilities 'I attest that: (1) the manuscript is not currently under consideration, in press, or published elsewhere, and the research reported will not be submitted elsewhere until a final decision is made as to its acceptability by the journal...'. Clearly, this manuscript was under consideration by *Experimental Animals* before a decision was made as to its acceptability for publication in *EBM*.

Upon discovering the dual submission, the Editor-in-Chief of *Experimental Animals* sent the corresponding author of the article an email, on June 29, 2010, rejecting the manuscript based on the duplicate submission to *EBM* and supplied the corresponding author proof of the duplicate submissions. In the case of *EBM* the article had already been published and the journal and publisher spent months considering options. We were aware that many of the authors might not have known or been involved in the dual submission and it was not within the purview of the journal to determine who was responsible.

Yet a dual submission had occurred and is problematic because it (1) wasted the time of Editors, Associate Editors and reviewers from two journals; (2) created the possibility of the article being published in two journals with the inherent risk of confusion for researchers and for indexing services, as well as international copyright issues; and (3) is contrary to the written rules of both journals and indeed violates the fundamental prohibition against dual submission adhered to by most biomedical journals. For these reasons, the *EBM* Editor-in-Chief and the officers of *SEBM* considered this dual submission a serious and unacceptable action. We now had to determine an action plan.

We began by writing a letter to all authors, on September 7, 2010, informing them of the dual submission. Accompanying this letter was undeniable proof of the dual submission. Dr Ding then wrote a letter of apology taking responsibility for the dual submission. We then wrote a letter to all authors on October 1, 2010 indicating that we

planned to publish this editorial. A draft of the Editorial was supplied and the authors were given an opportunity to respond. Other authors then wrote to indicate that they had no knowledge of the dual submission. In response to a subsequent email that I wrote to all authors dated October 26, 2010, Dr George Liu, as Dr Ding's supervisor, also accepted responsibility for the dual submission.

With this editorial we are stating our new EBM/SEBM policy on dual submissions.

The leadership of SEBM, the Royal Society of Medicine Press and your Editor-in-Chief want to take a strong stand against dual submission. Therefore as of this issue the following changes have been approved by the SEBM Publication Committee. The 'Instructions for Authors' included on our SEBM website (www.sebm.org) and the 'EBM Guidelines for Authors' on the RSMP EBM website (ebm.rsmjournals.com) now states: **Original Research Articles:** Manuscripts are accepted for review with the understanding that the same work has not been submitted or published elsewhere and, if accepted by *EBM*, will not be submitted or published elsewhere. **If evidence of dual**

submission is found, the manuscript will be rejected or, if published, retracted. The *EBM* Mandatory Submission Form that the authors must sign and submit now states under Authorship Responsibilities. I attest that: (1) the manuscript is not currently under consideration, in press, or published elsewhere and the research reported will not be submitted for publication elsewhere until a final decision has been made as to its acceptability by the journal. **If evidence of dual submission is found, the manuscript will be rejected or, if published, retracted.**

Simply stated, if we discover that anyone has submitted a manuscript elsewhere, while it is under consideration at *EBM*, it will be immediately rejected by *EBM*. If we discover this after we have published the article it will be retracted by the Editor-in-Chief. Dual submission of manuscripts demonstrates a lack of respect for the journals, the editors, associate editors, editorial boards, *ad hoc* reviewers and in this case the Society of Experimental Biology and Medicine and the Royal Society of Medicine Press. It is unacceptable behavior and as of today we are putting into affect a zero tolerance rule.