Responsible conduct of research and procedures for handling allegations of misconduct in Finland

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The Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (TENK)

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Outline

- The Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity – Organization and Role
- Violation of good scientific practise
- Some examples
FINNISH ADVISORY BOARD ON RESEARCH INTEGRITY (TENK)

- Founded 1991 (Decree 1347/1991)
- Appointed by the Ministry of Education and Culture for three year terms
- Office situated at the Federation of the Finnish Learned Societies, Helsinki
FINNISH GUIDELINES

- First national guidelines of Finland for the prevention, handling and investigation of misconduct and fraud in scientific research were published in 1994, revised in 1998, 2002, and 2012
  "Responsible conduct of research and procedures for handling allegations of misconduct in Finland" (2012)

- "A template for a researcher’s curriculum vitae" (2012)

- Ethical principles of research in the humanities and social and behavioural sciences and proposals for ethical review (2009)

- All TENK’s guidelines are published in Finnish, Swedish and English; See: www.tenk.fi
1. makes **proposals** and **issues statements** to governmental authorities on legislative and other matters concerning research ethics
2. acts as an **expert body** working towards the resolution of ethical issues relating to research
3. takes **initiative** in advancing research ethics and **promotes** discussion concerning research ethics
4. **monitors** international developments in the field and takes actively part in international cooperation
5. **informs** the public about research ethics
TENK’s role

- TENK is a kind of “appeals court” without being a court
- TENK does not investigate alleged misconduct cases. The investigations are conducted by the institutions themselves acc. to TENK guidelines
- Finnish universities and other research institutions are committed to following the TENK guidelines
- If the parties involved are not satisfied with the investigation, they can ask TENK for an opinion
- TENK does not pronounce verdicts or issue sanctions
Misconduct allegations in the world

No comparable global data available but plenty of indirect evidence that misconduct cases have multiplied over the past ten years

- In the U.S. the number of cases increased three-fold during 1998-2008
- Nature has detected plagiarism in up to 23% of articles sent to it for publication.
- Data from Thomson Reuters indicate that there was a 15-fold jump in the number of retraction notices between 2001 and 2010, from just 22 in 2001 to 339 in 2010. In the first six months of 2011 there were 210 retraction notices, suggesting that the numbers are continuing to climb (THE 25 August 2011).
Misconduct allegations in the world

- Particularly common in high-impact journals
- Medicine and pharmacology particularly prone to misconduct (May 28, 2009 - 20:33 in Psychology & Sociology)
- ORI consultant claims that one in every 100 researchers engages in serious misconduct over a three- to five-year period. (THE, 5 August 2010)
http://ori.hhs.gov/
Finland

- Very little data available from the research institutions beyond the allegations reported to TENK
- TENK deals with up to ten cases of alleged misconduct annually (13 requests in 2011, 8 in 2012)
- TENK is usually informed about alleged misconduct at post-graduate level, (licentiate, doctoral studies onwards, but does not exclude MA thesis level cases)
CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATING GOD SCIENTIFIC PRACTICE

Possible sanctions:
- Issued by the research institution
  - Dismissal
  - Revoking a degree
- Other consequences
  - Media publicity
  - Loss of academic reputation and career prospects
VIOLATIONS AGAINST THE RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH

1. Research misconduct (oredlighet, vilppi) - misleading the research community

2. Disregard for the responsible conduct of research (försummelse, piittaamattomuus hyvästä tieteellisestä käytännöstä) - gross negligence and carelessness

Different “schools of thought” - belong to academic and scientific debate and do not violate the responsible conduct of research
1. RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

- Fabrication
- Falsification (misrepresentation)
- Plagiarism
- Misappropriation
"You are completely free to carry out whatever research you want, as long as you come to these conclusions."
Fabrication refers to reporting invented observations to the research community

- the fabricated observations have not been made by using the methods as claimed in the research report
- presenting invented results in a research report
Examples

- Diederik Stapel, Dutch psychologist, University of Tilburg
  - Had fabricated data for years
  - >30 peer-reviewed papers including a report in the journal of Science ”How untidy environments may encourage discrimination”.
- Fabrication became an addiction

- Yoshitaka Fuji, Japanese anesthesiologist
  - 200 scientific articles over 20 years – how could it go on for so long? Fooled his co-authors
FALSIFICATION
(MISREPRESENTATION)
förfalskning, vääristellä

- modifying and presenting original observations deliberately so that the results based on those observations are distorted
  - unfounded modification or selection of research results
- omission of results or information that are essential for the conclusions
Example

- Dirk Smeesters, social psychologist at Erasmus University in Rotterdam studying how consumers behaved in different situations.
  - Admitted “massaging” the data in some of his papers
  - Resigned in June 2012
  - Tipped off by Simonsohn, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
Whaddyamean all my facts are wrong?!?

I copied everything straight off the internet!!

PLAGIARISM NOW LEGAL!?!

http://talknerdy2me.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/plagiarism.gif
PLAGIARISM
plagiering, luvaton lainaaminen

- representing another person’s material as one’s own without appropriate references
- includes research plans, manuscripts, articles, other texts or parts of them, visual materials, or translations.
- plagiarism includes direct copying as well as adapted copying
- Examples
  - “Former defense minister Karl Theodor zu Guttenberg, the series of plagiarism affairs started in 2011. Lifting was detected in almost 96% of zu Guttenberg’s thesis, and he was stripped of his doctoral title and resigned from office”
  - Elias Alsabati, researcher in medicine, was 23 years old and had more than 60 publications – all were copied, titles changed and Alsabati added his name among the authors
MISAPPROPRIATION
stöld, anastaminen

- refers to the unlawful presentation of another person’s result, idea, plan, observation or data as one’s own research
2. DISREGARD FOR THE RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH

- denigrating the role of other researchers in publications, such as neglecting to mention them
  - Professor A had left out the names of the other researchers in the research group.
- reporting research results and methods in a careless manner, resulting in misleading claims
- inadequate record-keeping and storage of results and research data
- Self-plagiarism (publishing the same research results multiple times ostensibly as new and novel results)
- misleading the research community in other ways
Great manuscript! But the lab chief always gets listed first.

From ORI
http://ori.dhhs.gov/education/products/RCR intro/c02/0c2.html}
OTHER IRRESPONSIBLE PRACTISES

- manipulating authorship, for example, by including in the list of authors persons who have **not participated** in the research, or by taking credit for work produced by what is referred to as **ghost authors**

- exaggerating one’s own scientific and scholarly achievements, for example, in a CV or its translation, in a list of publications, or on one’s homepage

- expanding the bibliography of a study to artificially increase the number of citations
OTHER IRRESPONSIBLE PRACTISES

- delaying the work of another researcher, for example, through refereed peer reviewing
- maliciously accusing a researcher of RCR violations
- hampering inappropriately the work of another researcher
- **misleading the general public** by publicly presenting deceptive or distorted information concerning one’s own research results or the scientific importance or applicability of those results
FINNISH PROCEDURE

The investigation procedure for alleged violations of the responsible conduct of research involves three steps:

1. a written notification
2. a preliminary inquiry
3. the investigation proper

A suspect or a complainant dissatisfied with the procedure used, the inquiry, the investigation or the final report can request TENK to give its opinion.
THE PROCESS FOR HANDLING ALLEGATIONS OF THE RESONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH

A party dissatisfied (the person alleged of misconduct or the instigator of the allegation) with the rector’s decision, with the procedures adopted in the preliminary inquiry, in the investigation proper or with the final report, may request a statement from TENK within six months of the date of notification.
THE PROCESS OF ISSUING STATEMENTS BY TENK

The Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (TENK)

1. Request for statement
2. Responses
3. Reply to the responses
4. Statement

The person requesting the statement
i.e. the person alleged of misconduct or the instigator of the allegation dissatisfied with the RCR investigation or the complainant

A reasoned request for a statement
Request for response
Response
Statement

Requests for responses
Responses
Notifications

The organisation conducting the RCR investigation
Other parties involved in the RCR investigation
The presentation is partly based on previous presentations:

- Arja Kallio, Academy of Finland
- Krista Varantola, University of Tampere – TENK Seminar/Sep 2011
- Finnish Advisory Board on Research Ethics (slides available from www.tenk.fi)
- Sanna Kaisa Spoof, Responsible conduct of research and procedures for handling allegations of misconduct in Finland, 3rd WCRI, Montreal 2013
- Cartoons from internet images