

■ *Letter to the Editor*

Student plagiarism: a matter of concern in medical education

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Dear Editor,

To guide and monitor students is a teacher's prime responsibility. Therefore we as teachers must be aware of the latest advancements in teaching and learning as per a student's point of view also, then only we can justify our roles.

In this regard I must mention the term "student plagiarism". In fact plagiarism is "taking over the ideas, methods, or written words of another, without acknowledgment and with the intention that they be taken as the work of the deceiver."¹ The traditional ways of making notes in the library with the help of various reference books and journals has been replaced by fast web based search engines where a plenty of readymade materials in the form of seminars, presentations and projects is just a click away. It is quite tempting to copy all the needed material from the internet and to edit it somewhere and present it as your own; with postgraduates the situation is more concerning as research is a prime component of the curriculum.

It is high time that we should start monitoring our students' seminars, dissertation protocols, and

research protocols for plagiarism. We need to teach our students about plagiarism, its forms and consequences. Guidelines for avoiding plagiarism should be taught to students as a part of medical ethics. Regarding checking for plagiarism there are many commercially available software like Ithenticate², TurnItIn³, CrossRef⁴, etc. These softwares compare the submitted material with the internet based information and check for similarity. The need of the hour is to educate the students about plagiarism and build our medical fraternity with genuine ideas and innovations. The students found guilty should be informed of the consequences they may face in the future and to enact the institutional guidelines.

References

1. American Association of University Professors. "Statement on Plagiarism." *Academe*.1989; 75(5): 47-48.
2. <http://www.ithenticate.com> (accessed April 2012)
3. <http://www.turnitin.com> (accessed April 2012)
4. <http://www.crossref.com> (accessed April 2012)

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