"The importance of research ethics when doing research and inner turmoils of a young researcher"

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To the editor:

Ethics is the practice of morals defined as universal ideas which are considered as perfect and without which mankind cannot operate or survive.

Getting published is equally important as it helps disseminate findings and inform the research community and public to a specific social goal and contribution. Discoveries are facilitated via dissemination, positive feedback and teamwork in the progressive and humanistic element represented by condision. Condision, or sharing, opposes its capitalistic-mercantilistic ancestor concept of 'buy and sell'. Research is not made to be bought or sold; it is a basic human necessity (Kuhn, 1962).

Nevertheless, many times research ethics is not respected whereby the work is cited for scopes that avert the original motive and even if work is properly cited or downright 'stolen' it is relevant to critically consider the rationale behind it.

An example is when my idea of structure analysis studies for the prion protein was 'copied' by a student in the application of something that is not considered ethical i.e. inducing the mutation of a native human protein. This is a dangerous application. My drug design work was done on mutant prion proteins not on native prion proteins.

The other one involved flexibility studies applied to an entirely different context to the original idea of protein denaturation and water effects on flexibility of said proteins.

Another example is the citation of another paper by another student who works on anandamide-like structures but it removes the original objective that is of fatal insomnia being a debilitating disorder and drug design cannot allow that type of aspecificity to occur, as again it is reflected on patients, with potential side effects. *Mu* receptors are spread in various anatomic regions thus using them to target breathing during sleep isn't an approach that could be considered safe. It could be employed as an option to other opioid analgesics allowing that the safety profile of the specific novel derivative are comparable in a fashion that improves toxicity and reduces the side effects of other opioids, including addiction and fetal absorption which can lead to miscarriage or malformation. Anandamide itself is an endogenous molecule locally produced whereas an antagonist or agonist would act globally. There are other strategies which can be exploited to modulate sleep too and a lot of novelty can still be explored in that ambit. It is acceptable to conclude that my and the other researcher's beliefs substantially clash therefore being cited does not make much sense as the views demonstrated are opposite and the fatal insomnia research was not aimed at designing *mu* receptor drugs.

Although this short letter means no criticism of journals that publish these articles, and the other individual's work, it is deleterious to the originator's hard work, who spent considerable amount of time thinking about how to solve problems originally and for a particular purpose; it also makes the work lose credibility, its meaning and damages which extend beyond financial loss/gains. It is why journals can contribute upholding research ethics by maintaining publication ethics and individualising research.

Ultimately, citations are a practical manifestation of what sharing is. Kuhn describes science as the exchange of a scientific 'constellation of beliefs, values, ideas between a given community'. Humanists Locke and Hume before him used words such as 'shared knowledge' or the purpose of 'science as being a fundamental part of a shared life in a shared world'.

Sharing knowledge does not mean however to universalise or globalise it. Condivision and globalisation are on opposite spectrums. Individualisation is still sustained by the concept of sharing, throughout research itself, as the lack of it cannot lead to creation. This could be supported by Arendt's cosmopolitan theory of differences, since as researchers we are humanely diverse.

Furthermore, bullying and competition support a 'mercantilistic' approach to the scientific world which contrasts progress in science that has proven to be delivered through sharing .

References

1. Kuhn, 1970, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*; 2nd ed. Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press Ltd. 210 pages.