

Letter to Editor

Ethical Behavior After an Unethical Publication: Glimpse of Hopes

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Dear Editor,

Finding stem cell researcher guilty of data fabrication at Kyoto University was surprising news in the first month of 2018.¹ The news was referring to the fabricated figures which had an inevitable impact on the final conclusion.¹ The affiliated university called for retraction of this paper. The main intention of writing this report is not to address the retraction of such scientific papers. Indeed, an ethical behavior following the released news is the main purpose of the current paper. Unfortunately, many papers are annually retracted, while the rapid growth in the number of these papers is worrying (See Figures 1 and 2). Of course, global attention should be focused on finding an optimal solution to manage current dilemma. However, scientometric analysis shows that retractions are more frequent among high-rank journals.² Moreover, in 2005 (See Figures 1 and 2), a sharp increase was observed in the rate of retractions, and this growth is still ongoing. To be honest, there is a big question that if current increase in retractions is only due to the scientific misconducts or improved detective tools. Taking together, in present report we aim to address an astonishing event by a Japanese group and some stories.^{3,4} In the released report, professor Yamanaka as a Nobel Prize winner in 2012 and also the director of the affiliated department of retracted paper said that he is ready to send back his Nobel Prize because of the story happened in the

mentioned-report. Hence, Professor Yamanaka was not an author of the retracted paper. The immediate reaction by Professor Yamanaka addressing the fabrication data even before the journal was a promising news as ethical behavior in current scientific atmosphere.⁵ Certainly, maintaining the ethical atmosphere ethical is necessary to keep public truthfulness in scientific publications.⁶ In other words, the action by professor Yamanaka is a useful pattern for many authorities and researchers globally who are even partially faced with this problem. Science is basically self-correcting, now we have scientists who are self-correcting their departments, then we may translate the reaction by professor Yamanaka addressing “Ethical behavior following an unethical manner”. Conclusively, this fabricated data and following resignation suggestion by the head of the department can be nicely translated as an ethical decision after an unethical act. Prevention of plagiarism needs both detective tools and revised ethical behaviors established in the scientific communities.

Author's Contribution

ATBA is the single author of the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest Disclosures

No conflict of interest to declare.

Ethical Statement

Not applicable.

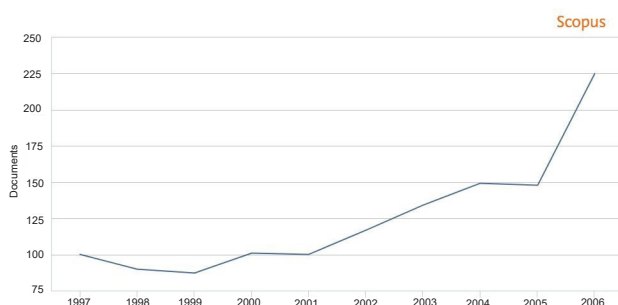


Figure 1. Increased Number of Retracted Papers Indexed in Scopus in 10 Years Duration (1997–2006).

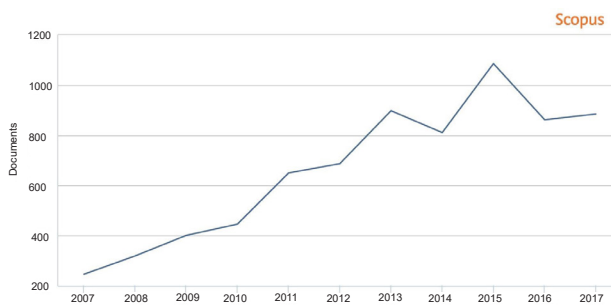


Figure 2. Steady Increase of Retracted Papers Indexed in Scopus in 10 Years Duration (2007–2017).


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