A case of literary “dysphagia”

Sir,
We were searching for cause of dysphagia due to oro-pharyngeal candidiasis in HIV patients when we chanced on two articles\(^1,2\) on dysphagia, which seem like a classic case of “duplicate publication”\(^3\).

If one carefully scrutinizes these two articles they are...
similar and have been published in two different journals. Except for some change in authors the two are same case reports, the corresponding author remaining the same for both the articles. The following statements which are repeated in both articles like “45-year-old male patient presented with the complaint of intermittent dysphagia for solids of 10 years duration”; “On MR angiography an aberrant right subclavian artery arising from the aortic arch distal to the left subclavian artery crossing the midline behind the oesophagus was seen” and in discussion “The “jest of nature” is a birth defect encompassing any aortic root vascular anomaly that causes esophageal dysphagia” highlight this repetition. One article\textsuperscript{[2]} seems to be a condensed version of the other.\textsuperscript{[1]} Even the figures are repeated.

This is a clear case of duplicate publication as it is clearly stated that articles sent to one journal should not be sent or published in any other journal without copyright permission.\textsuperscript{[3,4]}

Though there is a high degree of trust and veracity in publications there have been nearly 100 duplicate publications in literature, a serious type of misconduct.\textsuperscript{[4]} Duplicate publications are that in which there is a significant degree of overlap with an article already published.\textsuperscript{[4,5]} This entails articles with similar hypothesis, samples, methodology, conclusions, same or different authors and also involves in some cases slicing data and republishing data without the permission of the editors of the journal.\textsuperscript{[5,6]}

In this case both the articles have not only the same name “dysphagia due to a rare cause” they have been published in the same year.\textsuperscript{[1,2]} This exonerates the editors as they had no way in knowing that the article has been published as it takes time for an article to come on medline, but the corresponding author should have withdrawn the article from one of the two journals or at least referenced the first published article\textsuperscript{[3]} in the latter article.\textsuperscript{[4]}

Duplicate publications are serious violation of the copyright law, they are unethical and lead to over inflated bibliography of non-meritorious authors.

With the availability of Internet based search engines and the wide availability of journals on the net there is a need for greater unity in Biomedical journal editors to come forward and take stringent action against such duplicate publications.\textsuperscript{[6,7]}

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