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# **Definitions of Research Integrity**

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# Is there an agreed definition?

- The OECD Consensus Report on Scientific Integrity: Core Misconduct
- “Research misconduct is defined as fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results.”
- **Fabrication** is making up results and recording or reporting them.
- **Falsification** is manipulating research, materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record.
- **Plagiarism** is the appropriation of another person’s ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit, including those obtained through confidential review of others’ research proposals and manuscripts.

# Research Practice Misconduct

- OECD Consensus Report distinguishes “RPM”:
  - Inappropriate, harmful or dangerous research methods
  - Poor research design
  - Experimental, analytical or computational errors
  - Violation of human subject protocols
  - Abuse of laboratory animals
- But this mixes poor performance and serious violation

# What is the purpose of “Research Integrity”?

- To ensure that the findings of research are secure, reliable and not misleading
- That they provide a basis and foundation for future of research
- To protect intellectual property
- “Scientific Reasons”

# But what assurance does the wider public want?

- Approved use of personal biological materials
- Adherence to appropriate “informed consent”
- Protection of confidentiality
- No risk to public or the environment
- Transparency about conflicts of interest
- [Tobacco, Alcohol, Food, Climate Change]

# We have to have a wider definition

- Why? If not the public will not accept that regulation can be left to researchers
- Cannot treat public concerns as lower order
- They will question research which should be accepted
- They will not participate in research
- They may seek increasing legal restrictions

# RCUK Definition

- FFP, Of Course
- Misrepresentation
  - Conflicts of Interest and Duplication
  - Reckless selection of relevant findings (not just “falsification” – but it is that)
- Preservation of data for replication
- Duty of Care

# We MUST Widen the Definition

- Cannot classify Unacceptable Practices as merely “Questionable”
- Must have standards for informed consent, confidentiality, declarations of interest
- Destruction or sloppiness with data not acceptable: set requirements needed



# Malpractice vs. Poor Performance

“Research misconduct does not include honest error”  
(OECD Consensus Report)

- Even in “Plagiarism”
  - I inadvertently paraphrased parts of your summary
  - I unintentionally used some of your results without attribution
  - I copied great chunks of your article
  - I stole your research application

# Poor Performance in Research Design

- Sampling frameworks which cannot robustly support conclusions
- Research assistants did not fully understand the limitations of the analytical tools used
- Ethical issues were not identified properly at the outset
- Calibration of equipment was defective
- But these cannot be endlessly repeated

# Poor Performance in Publication

- Inappropriate selection of results
- Non-creditation of genuine contributors or over-creditation of marginal contributors
- “Salami slicing” which exaggerates impact
- Non-declaration of interests
- Distinction between these and misrepresentation

# Institutional, National and International Standards

- Who defines what is “unacceptable”?
- How do we get international agreement to set the highest standards?
- Can we have international projects without common agreement?
- How do we set ethical and public standards for international projects?

# Whose role?

- At National levels
  - Researchers and academics
  - Employers
  - Funders and Other Stakeholders (national agreement)
  - Or Legislatures
- At International Level
  - How do we get these addressed and agreed?

# Is there an appetite?

- We recognise there are problems but back away from them
- Can we build on the ESF Members' Forum Report
- Stop referring to “Questionable Practices” and be clear about the “Unacceptable”