



Online Ethics Center
FOR ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE

A Claim of Prior Discovery by a Reviewer

Author(s)

Caroline Whitbeck

Year

2000

Description

A scenario about a researcher who, after reviewing a journal article, recommends rejecting it because it is not novel.

Body

As the editor of J.AAA you ask Prof. Sharp to review a manuscript submitted to your journal by Prof. Wright, because you know that Sharp works in the same area.

Sharp takes the full time allowed for review of Wright's article and, at the end of the review period, sends a letter recommending that J.AAA reject the work by Wright, on the grounds that it is not novel. Sharp claims that it is simply a repeat of the work that Sharp has published in the J.BBB, but Sharp does not give a full citation of that work.

What do you do?

Further Questions:

Would you, as an editor of a journal, knowingly send a manuscript to a direct competitor of the author of an article? If you do, what if any precautions to you take to ensure fairness of review?

Given that reviewers need to be knowledgeable about the work they review, would you expect a reviewer engaged in the same research necessarily to disqualify himself and return the manuscript? Why, or why not? How would the reviewer learn of these expectations?

If you discovered that the reviewer's work in J. BBB had not actually been published, what action would you take? Would the action be different if the article was under review by J.BBB? Would you notify anyone else about the reviewer's misrepresentation?

Notes

Caroline Whitbeck introduced methods and modules for discussing numerous issues in responsible conduct of research at a Sigma Xi Forum in 2000. Partial funding for the development of this material came from an NIH grant.

You can find the entire sequence on the OEC at [Scenarios for Ethics Modules in the Responsible Conduct of Research](#). Some information in these historical modules may be out-of-date; for instance, there may be a new edition of the professional society's code that is referred to in an item. If you have suggestions for updates, please contact the OEC.

Contributor(s)

Caroline Whitbeck

Rights

Use of Materials on the OEC

Resource Type

Case Study / Scenario

Parent Collection

Scenarios for Ethics Modules in the Responsible Conduct of Research

Topics

Authorship

Peer Review

Publication Ethics

Research and Practice

Discipline(s)

Research Ethics

Publisher

Online Ethics Center