LETTER TO EDITOR: RESPONSE

Scientific misconduct encountered by APAME journals: insight?

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Dear Editor,

Viroj Wiwanitkit’s comments on our paper are well taken, and reinforce the growing concern among editorial boards and the scientific community at large, over issues of research and publication misconduct. We agree that while the use of anti-plagiarism tools should be promoted, the mere detection of text copying is not enough. The detection of conceptual plagiarism is more difficult and requires highly vigilant and committed reviewers and editorial staff. Also we cannot agree more that all stakeholders have their roles in upholding ethical standards in publications. Promotion of an ethical publication culture involves not just institutional investments into mentoring of young researchers but also continual peer education within the publication community. In this regard we would like to share a refreshing experience of the Association of Malaysian Medical Journal Editors (AMMJE). A workshop for reviewers and editors conducted by AMMJE in December 2015 at the University of Malaya included an open discussion of publication ethics based on 10 practical case scenarios. This generated much frank discussion from all levels of participants. It was revealing, though not surprising, that there are various shades of perception of ethical infringements and many different management styles of dealing with the problems.