

Letter to the Editor

The Turnitin Plagiarism Check-up System – Problem for Professors instead for Students

Dear Sir,

At the Faculty of Medicine, University of Rijeka, Croatia, for the past several years it has been in use the Turnitin plagiarism check-up control system for checking undergraduate and graduate students' final theses. Each professor, a head of a course, has to check the thesis by the Turnitin check-up plagiarism system and personally put the thesis on the Internet system, thus further adding onto one's already burdened schedule.

Students are very demanding when it comes to their rights and when seeking that their work is checked on time by the above mentioned system. This results in professors refusing to take on mentorships which in turn is a problem for students. Professors who only teach full time at the Faculty thus become the only choice of mentors, as students do have to finish their studies, but they miss out on having mentors from a wide variety of the clinical brunch of studies.

Plagiarism in medicine originates already from the medieval times when Valverde copied Versalius' pictures (Markatos K). Therefore in principle, not one medical research can be free of plagiarism 100%, because new researches use achieved scientific knowledge. The well known institutes from developed countries are also not immune to plagiarism.

Plagiarism can be avoided if during the whole process of education the students are thought high ethical values and mentors here play especially important role. From this author's own experience, the 20 theses fed into Turnitin system do not excide 25% of plagiarism and considering the possibilities such Internet, Medline and other online data available, this is a very good result.

In conclusion, if professor is a good mentor and educator, if they give to each student a different topic for research and if they instil into their students high ethical standards, there is no danger of the plagiarism. That means that Turnitin and similar plagiarism check-up systems should be left for doctoral theses, books, papers for ranked journals and not for hundreds of undergraduate and graduate students' theses. If it is compulsory for professors to use Turnitin, they then lose the valuable time for education of students and serious scientific research.

References:

Markatos K, Arkoudi K, Androutsos G. Juan Valverde se Amusco (1525-1588): an eminent anatomist of the renaissance or a plagiarist of Versalius? His work and its impact in renaissance anatomy. *Acta Chir Belg* 2017; 117(6):407-411.

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