

Original article

Promotion of research integrity in Latin American institutions

Promoción de la integridad en investigación en instituciones latinoamericanas

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Abstract

Most Latin American Research Institutions do not have an establish system to detect and denounce research misconduct. This article reflects on the need to establish high standards in research integrity and monitoring mechanisms in Latin American Research Institutions in order to have an accurate science and for transferring research results to public policies, health promotion and social progress. Based on the experience of developed countries, we propose the following mechanisms to promote research integrity: to promote a culture to enhance good research practices; to establish norms to maintain responsible conduct of research; to establish monitoring proceedings; and to establish mechanisms of support to affront demands of research misconduct.

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Keywords: Research integrity; Research misconduct; Responsible conduct of research; Monitoring; Research ethic

Resumen

La mayoría de las Instituciones Latinoamericanas de Investigación no tienen un sistema establecido para detectar y denunciar faltas en la conducta de investigación. Este artículo reflexio-

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na sobre la necesidad de establecer altos estándares de integridad científica y mecanismos de monitoreo en Instituciones Latinoamericanas de Investigación para lograr una ciencia válida y para transferir los resultados de investigación a políticas públicas, promoción de la salud y progreso social. Basándose en la experiencia de países desarrollados, proponemos los siguientes mecanismos para promover la integridad científica: promover una cultura que mejore las prácticas de investigación; establecer normas de conducta responsable de investigación; establecer procedimientos de monitoreo; y establecer mecanismos de apoyo para enfrentar las denuncias de faltas en conducta de investigación.

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Palabras clave: Integridad científica; Faltas en la conducta de investigación; Conducta responsable de investigación; Monitoreo; Ética de la investigación

Introduction

For many years, problems in research integrity have been discussed and detected throughout the world, for which there is need to promote research good practices in order to improve research quality. The numerous examples of research misconduct reported globally questioned the efficacy of the scientific community to self-regulation and the ability of regulatory agencies to guaranty research integrity (Aultman, 2013). This is paramount, since precise and credible data are necessary in order to transfer scientific evidence to public policies.

Research integrity is influenced by the moral character of scientists and by the way in which external pressures are managed at institutional and individual level deriving in research misconduct. Researchers may be influenced, for example, by financial interests (Antes et al., 2007) or by looking for personal prestige (Vastag, 2006).

A study questionnaire sent to NIH-funded PIs proved there is a very real problem with research misconduct revealing that if the 167 scientists who had observed misconduct in the study were multiplied by the entire mass of scientific researchers the NIH supports, “the number of scientists observing incidents of suspected research misconduct in that population would be about 4650 incidents per year.” (ORI, 2008).

On the other hand, most Latin American countries do not have an establish system to detect and denounce research misconduct, for which it is difficult to know the frequency and scope of research misconduct in Latin American research Institutions. But, there is

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