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Article in *Annals of Biomedical Engineering* · September 2012

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Five Simple Rules to Avoid Plagiarism

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We recognize that many, probably even most, scientific publications in English are written by people who are writing in English as a second language, and who may not live in an English-speaking country. We understand that non-native speakers may invest more time and labor writing for English-language journals like the *Annals*. “Patchwriting”, blending original and borrowed text without citing the borrowed text, is a common time-saving strategy used by non-native English speakers and English speaking novice writers instead of paraphrasing that, although tolerated in many areas, is nonetheless plagiarism.² We urge institutions and supervisors to offer training and guidance to help novice writers and non-native English speakers gain confidence and improve their writing skills.

However, as the recent scandals involving the plagiarized Ph.D. theses of government officials in Germany, Hungary, and Romania show,³ some scientists plagiarize abundantly in their native languages, no matter what language they speak. Plagiarism detection software has become more sophisticated, but the best defense remains vigilance by authors, reviewers and readers.

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