

Korean medical students' views on plagiarism and difference of attitude

towards plagiarism according to their experience of plagiarism



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ABSTRACT

Purpose: It aimed at providing basic data on the Korean medical students' views on plagiarism and difference of attitude towards plagiarism according to their experience of plagiarism.
Methods: The questionnaire made by Turnitin® was distributed to the 67 first year medical students of Hallym University, Korea on December 17, 2016 through web-survey, Survey Monkey. Out of 67, 60 responses were analyzed with descriptive statistics and comparison statistics.
Results: Average knowledge level on plagiarism checked through 8 items was 39.5/60 (65.8%). More than half did not know where they can find the guidance to reference other's work. They are little confident (41.7%) or not confident (11.7%) on their referencing other's work. They feel that plagiarism issue was not dealt with seriously in the University (53.3%). Eighty percent of students want their teacher to use text matching software to check students' work. They think that text matching software helps them to spend more time for exact referencing work (48.3%). Forty six (75.4%) students have an experience of cut and paste from internet to their work without citing original work. Experience of cut and paste does not affect their knowledge level on plagiarism ($P = 0.9037$). Experience of cut and paste does not affect their punishment on the plagiarism ($P=0.0823$). If students have an experience of cut and paste, they knew more about other students' cut and paste behavior ($P=0.05$).
Conclusion: Student's knowledge level about plagiarism was not enough. Korean medical school should introduce the correct referencing of others' work and concept of plagiarism to the class for more correct referencing at writing.

INTRODUCTION

Plagiarism is defined as "the act of using another person's words or ideas without giving credit to that person: the act of plagiarizing something." Most graduates of medical schools will become physicians or basic medicine researchers in Korea. Although the plagiarism case is very rare in Korea, the cut and paste behavior from other's work is probably not rare because they are not native speakers. After the introduction of CrossCheck (Similarity check) in 2013 to Korean scholarly journal editors, it is a routine work for them to check the similarity when they receive the manuscripts. Therefore, medical students should understand the concept of plagiarism and the prevention or check system for plagiarism or cut and paste. This study aimed at identifying the Korean medical students' basic knowledge on plagiarism, their view on plagiarism, and their difference of attitude towards plagiarism according to their experience of plagiarism using questionnaires developed by Turnitin, LLC. The results will be able to be considered for the implementation of professionalism curriculum for medical students

METHODS

Study design: It is the cross-sectional descriptive study using survey questionnaire.
Subjects: The 67 1st year undergraduate medical students in Hallym University, Korea were invited to this study. Out of them, 60 students agreed to participate in the survey.
Setting: Web survey with Survey Monkey® was done on December 17, 2015 in Hallym University medical campus through laptop computer. Survey questionnaire was got from Turnitin for research purpose. It consisted of 8 knowledge items and 14 items on present status of plagiarism prevention or attitudes towards plagiarism.
Statistical analysis: Descriptive analysis and comparison between group of cut and paste experiences without citation of source data and the other group were analyzed for their attitude towards plagiarism. DBSTAT 5.0® (DBSTAT, Seoul, Korea) available from: <http://dbstat.com/> was used for statistical analysis.
Ethical approval: Informed consent from all subject were received.

RESULTS

Average knowledge level on plagiarism checked through 8 items was 39.5/60 (65.8%) (Fig.1). More than half did not know where they can find the guidance to reference other's work. Twenty seven students (45.8%) believed that the university or college guidelines make it clear how to correctly reference other people's works. Twenty five (45.7%) students believe that tutors or teachers check they have correctly referenced other people's work in their own. Sixteen students (26.7%) believe that their tutors or teachers are always able to spot when unoriginal material has been submitted as a student's own. Eighty percent of students want their teacher to use text matching software to check students' work. They think that text matching software helps them to spend more time for exact referencing work (48.3%). Forty six (75.4%) students have an experience of cut and paste from internet to their work without citing original work. When they have such an experience, the amount of cut and paste was a few words (7.3%), a few sentences (49.1%), a paragraph or more (30.9%), and all of my assignment (0%). They ever used an essay writing service to write an assignment (20.3%). They are aware of other students (either friends or classmates) who have cut and pasted material from the internet or who have used an essay writing service (90%). Twenty nine (48.3%) feel that students devalued qualification who cut and paste material (Fig. 2).

The desired actions to student who plagiarized were presented in Fig. 3. Experience of cut and paste does not affect their knowledge level on plagiarism ($P = 0.9037$). Experience of cut and paste does not affect their punishment degree on the plagiarism ($P=0.0823$). If students have an experience of cut and paste, they knew more about other students' cut and paste behavior (Fig. 4, $P=0.05$).

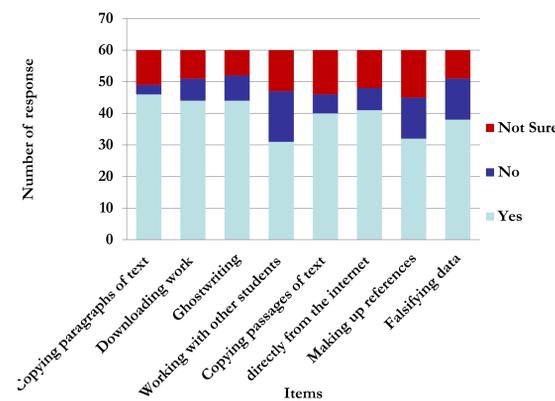


Fig. 1. Knowledge level on plagiarism of medical students in Hallym University, Korea, December, 2016.

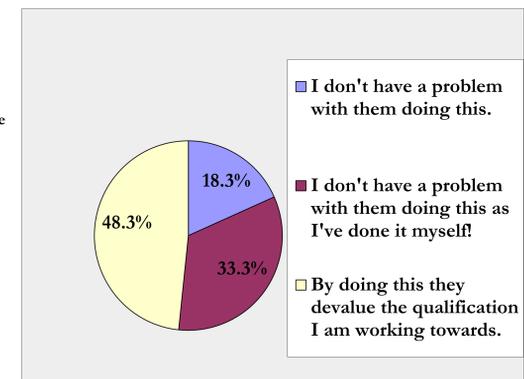


Fig. 2. How students feel about students who cut and paste material from the internet or who use essay writing services and then submit this work as their own?

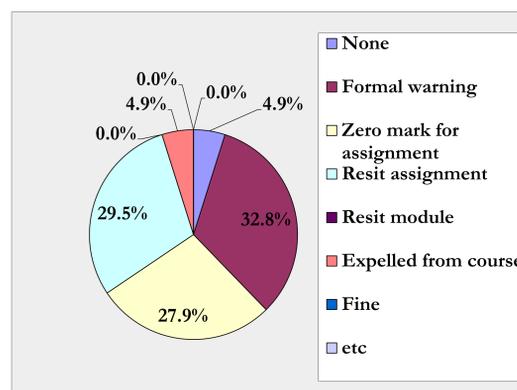


Fig. 3. What action should be taken against students who submit other people's work as their own without acknowledgement?

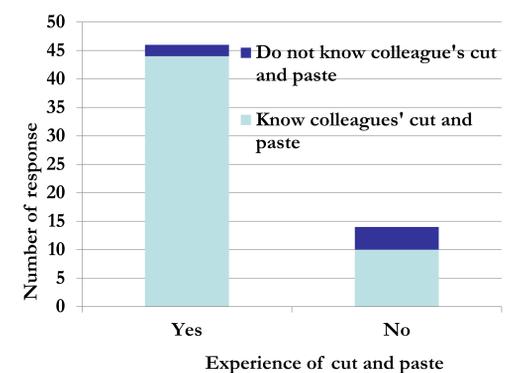


Fig. 4. How students knew more about other students' cut and paste behavior according to their experience of cut and paste.

DISCUSSION

There are very few articles on the prevalence of plagiarism by medical students. In Korea, there was a case report of plagiarism by medical students during problem-based learning course [1]. In Australia, out of 43 year 5 dental students, 30% of them thought that plagiarism was a problem because it was not being dealt with effectively [2]. In Hallym University, Korea prevalence of self-reported plagiarism was 75.4%. Their knowledge on plagiarism is also not enough, less than 50% to all items (Fig. 1). It might be originated from the facts as follows: University does not sufficiently provide the accurate definition of plagiarism; University does not sufficiently provide the guideline to evade the plagiarism; Tutors or teachers does not deal with plagiarism seriously; and, Tutors or teachers does not use text matching program so that they does not feed back student's work sufficiently. Therefore, for the prevention of plagiarism and appropriate writing, the tutors or teachers should deal with plagiarism more seriously, should use text matching software to feedback students' work. In the writing course, paraphrasing other's work in student's own word should be trained especially in English writing.

Interestingly, there is no difference of knowledge level on plagiarism and punishment level to plagiarism according to experience of plagiarism. Later can be explained that although they have an experience of plagiarism, they have no concept on plagiarism or they do not consider it serious fraud or dis-integrity of professionalism. In conclusion, the medical students' knowledge on plagiarism is not enough. The attitudes towards plagiarism case is not strict if they have an experience of plagiarism. Medical students in Hallym University should be trained for the citation methods of others' work or idea appropriately as well as for good writing methods.

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