

Response to a case of plagiarism in the *International Journal of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease*

A CASE OF PLAGIARISM was recently brought to the attention of the *International Journal of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease* (IJTLD) by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Zambia. The plagiarism involved a paper by Chintu and Mwaba entitled 'Tuberculosis in children with human immunodeficiency virus infection' published in the IJTLD,¹ which included large sections taken verbatim directly from, and without referring to, an article by Havlir and Barnes entitled 'Tuberculosis in patients with human immunodeficiency virus infection' published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (NEJM).²

What made the case of plagiarism in the IJTLD different from many others is that this was a State-of-the-Art article written on invitation, and not an article reporting original results. However, using verbatim sections, even if not original results but only the words of another author, still constitutes plagiarism and is unacceptable.

A specific process was followed to manage this case of plagiarism. First, all the associate editors of the IJTLD were informed and asked for their comments. Second, letters were sent to Dr Drazen, editor of the NEJM, to the authors of the NEJM article, Havlir and Barnes, and to the authors of the IJTLD article, Chintu and Mwaba, with information regarding the case, informing them that a statement would be published in the IJTLD and asking for their response. Third, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Zambia was informed about the process that would be followed. Finally, as no official policy on plagiarism had yet been put in place for the IJTLD, the Editors-in-Chief, the Executive Director and other senior Union staff will draft an official policy on plagiarism which will include guidelines for attempting to prevent sim-

ilar situations in the future. This plagiarism policy will be sent to all associate editors, will be published in the IJTLD and will be included in the Instructions to authors.

Drs Chintu and Mwaba have admitted to a lack of rigour in preparing their State of the Art article. By publishing this editorial, the IJTLD officially retracts the paper by Chintu and Mwaba, and the online version of the IJTLD will be withdrawn from the Ingenta host site. The IJTLD will not publish any article by either of these authors for a period of 5 years.

We wish to thank the University of Zambia for bringing this case of plagiarism to our attention.

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References

- 1 Chintu C, Mwaba P. Tuberculosis in children with human immunodeficiency virus infection. *Int J Tuberc Lung Dis* 2005; 9: 477-484.
- 2 Havlir D V, Barnes P F. Tuberculosis in patients with human immunodeficiency virus infection. *N Engl J Med* 1999; 340: 367-373.