

Letter to Editor

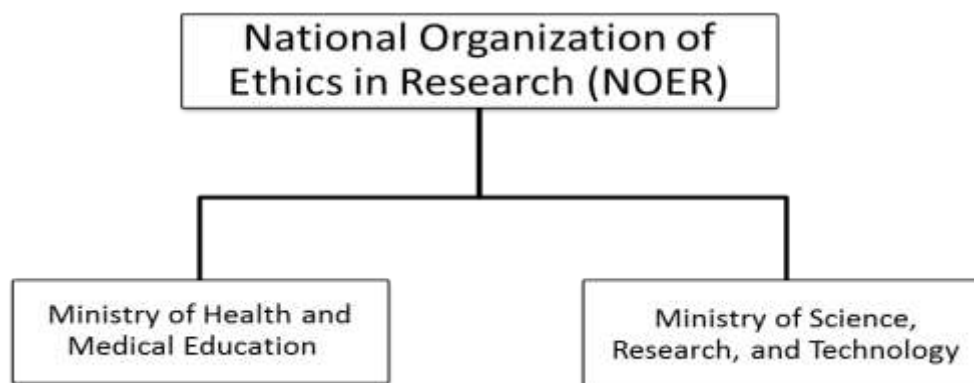
# Requirement of National Organization of Ethics in Research

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Recently, Abbasiyan *et al.* published an interesting paper entitled “Do Iranian Medical Journal Editors Have a Good Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Plagiarism? ”, addressing the ethical disputes occurred within last years in the Iranian research atmosphere [1]. In this study, authors nicely discussed the recent reports and flagged a critical suggestion for research decision-makers in Iran. Second, Enjoo published a letter indicating the urgent need to have a new organization for having better situation [2]. In the meantime, I think that newer policy help this idea before it can be widely referred. At first glance, there is an agreement that the current ethical administrative structure conducted by health ministry is basically well-structured. However, we expect this committee to possibly reduce the chance of the act of scientific misconducts. Nevertheless, I do not believe that the current designed structure can lead to preventing the act of ethical misbehavior. From scientific point of view, it has long been acknowledged that the scientific journals retract papers due to the various types of flaws, including falsification, duplication, data manipulation and fabrication. First, the journal publishes a notice indicating a report of retraction, but it clearly sends a message that editors/reviewers (as a main scientific judge) are not efficiently involved in the review process [3, 4]. This is a neglected part of scientific publishing which is always far from the intense attention. Given new structure of ethical organization as termed “ National Organization of Ethics in Research ”, training the editors and reviewers should be in the first priority. Till now, researchers have never got the credit or scores for their reviewing activities. Being ranked in the top list of the best accredited reviewers is a suggestion for science stakeholders to choose the best reviewers for national journals: those who are at least a permanent member of editorial board. With this regard, Publons suggests the potential candidates to the senior editors in order to primarily check the reviewers to be a member of editorial boards or blind reviewer process [5, 6]. The dark side of ethical issues is that we may not face with a real scientific researcher who commit such submissions or fraud! Indeed, it can raise another message that no specific education had been obliged for young researchers before they achieve the further promotions. Altogether, it can be concluded that asking independent advisors in designing and developing the structure “ National Organization of Ethics in Research ” (NOER) is the most crucial step for having a new organization with scientific structure arranging and directing such educations and ethical surveys for even senior professors within the national scale. Providing the independency of NOER and independent advisors with proper background can help Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology to effectively prevent such bad news published in *Nature* and *Science* [7, 8].



**Figure 1:** The scheme for NOER responsible for regulating the ethics in Iran

Being ranked among the countries with the highest retraction rates is the main consequence of neglected pieces of advice by faithful and independent researchers who flagged the problem earlier [9]. Undoubtedly, the establishment of the NOER responsible for disseminating the principles of ethical research in Iran is an inevitable step to fight against increased scientific misconducts, even in the close future. Finally, I conclude that the possibility of decreasing the risk of disclosing the future ethical misconducts is still under question. Without NOER acting as a watchdog (which is a bottleneck for decision-makers in research), it is almost impossible to prevent/stop the increase of the rate of reports and dubious news on the trend of scientific misconducts in each country. The last sentence published in *Science* news “...If it also included papers published in Farsi—Iran's national language—the rate could change” is a direct probe showing that a new wave of bad news seems close.

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