

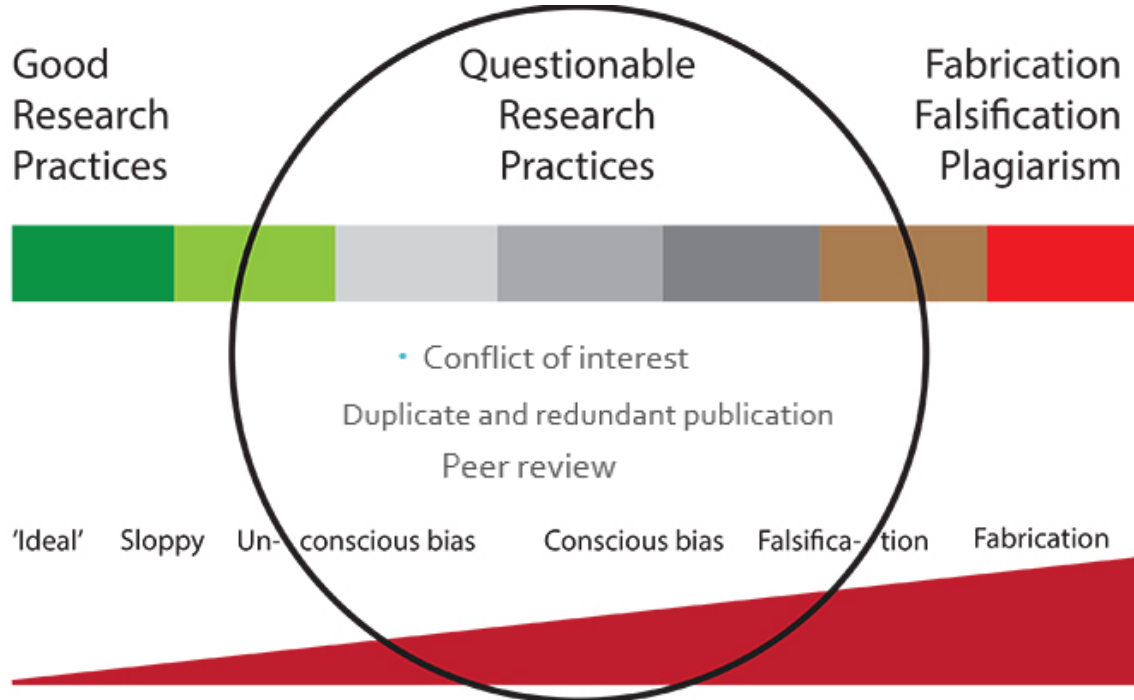
Staying away from 'the naughty corner': shifting the focus from misconduct to integrity

South East Queensland Combined Human
Research Ethics Training Day
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Mark Israel

Senior Consultant, Australasian Human Research Ethics Consultancy Services
Adjunct Professor, Flinders University and Visiting Academic, UWA

FFP



Research Integrity Codes

- Dominant position in many jurisdictions dwells on **misconduct**, but...
- Some national codes emphasize integrity and the concepts of **honesty, carefulness, independence and fair recognition**

THE TRI-AGENCY FRAMEWORK: RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH



The Netherlands Code of Conduct for Academic Practice

Principles of good academic teaching and research

RCUK Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct

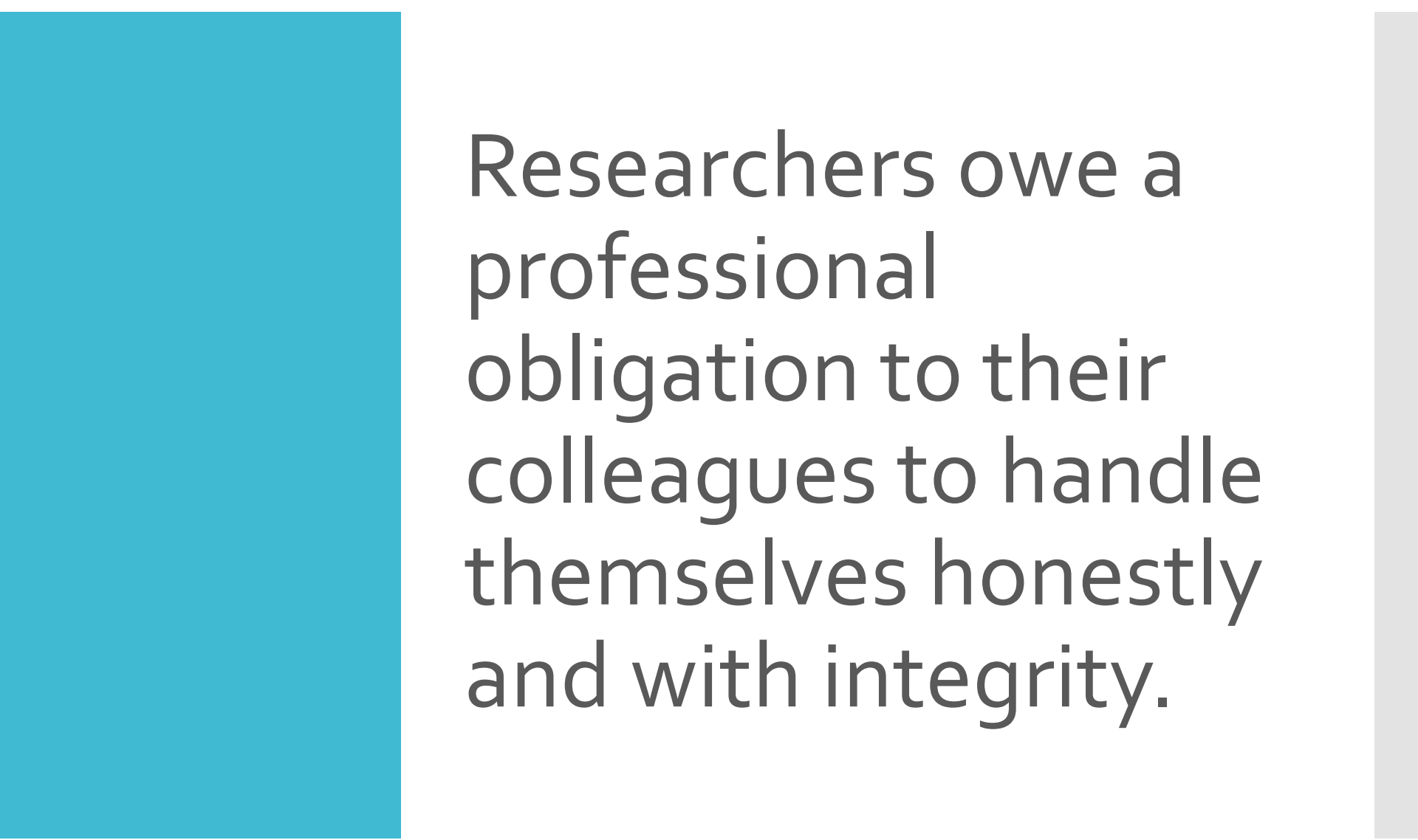


OMBUDSMAN
FÜR DIE
WISSENSCHAFT



Singapore Statement
on
Research Integrity

...principles and responsibilities
for research worldwide...



Researchers owe a professional obligation to their colleagues to handle themselves honestly and with integrity.

Acting with Integrity

- Stephen Carter (1996:7) on integrity
 - Discerning what is right and what is wrong
 - Acting on what you have discerned, even at personal cost
 - Saying openly that you are acting on your understanding of right from wrong.

Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007, under review)



- Australian Code requires institutions to
 - create appropriate **policies** and
 - foster and support a **culture** of ethical and responsible conduct.
- **Part A**
 - **best practice** for both institutions and researchers.
How to
 - manage **research data** and materials
 - **publish and disseminate** research findings, including proper attribution of authorship,
 - supervise research trainees
 - conduct effective **peer review**
 - manage **conflicts of interest**.
- **Part B**
 - framework for handling **breaches** of the *Code* and research misconduct

Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007)



- Code is predicated on a diffusion of responsibility:
 - *Everyone involved in research needs to take responsibility for ensuring that this culture of honesty and integrity is system-wide. (Anderson 2013).*

Fabrication and Falsification

- In 2013, **UNSW** suspended the work on an experimental drug for skin cancer by Levon Khachigian, and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) did the same with A\$8.4 million in funding.
 - Four of Khachigian's papers had already been retracted in 2009 and 2010
 - During the investigation, Khachigian faced further accusations that he had manipulated images for publication (Retraction Watch [2013](#)).

Fabrication and Falsification

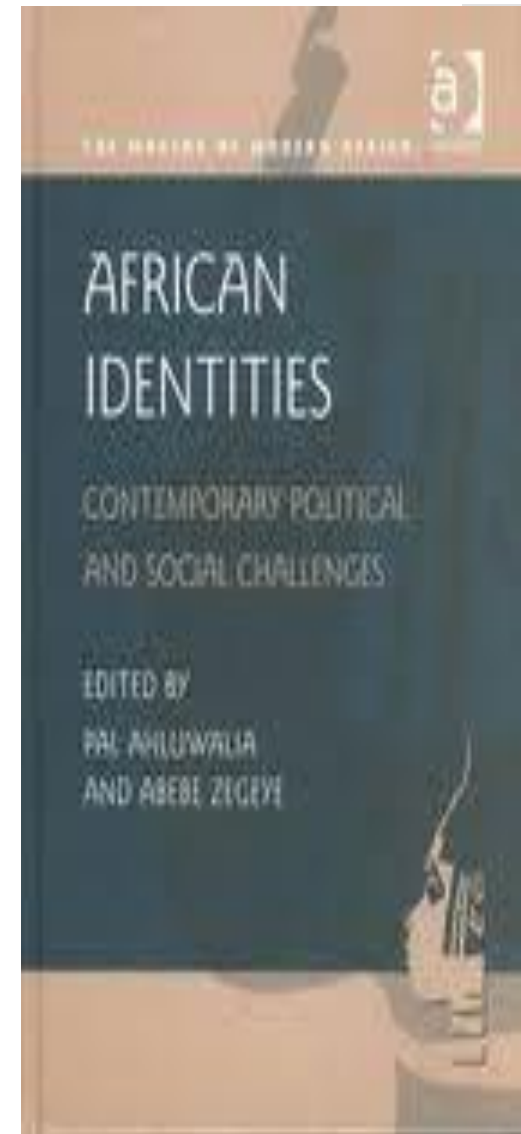
- In 2014, **QUT** ([2014](#)) accepted findings of an external independent inquiry QUT had established to investigate misrepresentation of data relating to stem cells in article and grant application.
 - finding of misconduct by one researcher
 - failure by another to fulfil her responsibilities as a supervisor.

Fabrication and Falsification

- UQ investigation of a neurologist and a speech pathologist
 - Bruce Murdoch and Caroline Barwood resigned after a whistleblower claimed they had not undertaken the experiments on Parkinson's disease whose results they had purported to report in various journals.
 - UQ
 - failed to find any evidence that the experiment had been conducted
 - discovered duplicate publication, statistical error, and misattribution of authorship.
 - informed the relevant journals
 - three retracted articles in 2014 and another in 2016.
 - agreed to repay grant money awarded to researchers on basis of a track record that included the retracted publications.
 - Both researchers charged with fraud by the Crime and Corruption Commission...

Plagiarism

- Abebe Zegeye
 - Professor of sociology
 - Dismissed from research directorship at University of the Witwatersrand, 2010
 - Complaints from three senior international academics
 - Kwame Appiah, Stuart Hall and David Goldberg
 - Institution appointed an arbitrator who reportedly uncovered 140 instances of plagiarism in 9 publications for work that was undertaken over 8 years, with material being recycled from 30 scholars
 - Zegeye had 'blatantly, repeatedly and extensively misrepresented published work of a range of authors [including themselves] as his own' (from the report of the arbitrator, 2011)
 - Forced to resign from UniSA, 2011



Intellectual property lawyer loses papers for ... plagiarism

with 8 comments

Although most of what Alanis Morissette sang about in her hit song "Ironic" wasn't irony at all, had she included a line or two about Angela Adrian she would have nailed it.

Adrian is an expert in intellectual property law, a former editor of the *International Journal of Intellectual Property Management*, a legal scholar whose resume boasts more degrees than a protractor. According to this [bio](#):

“

Dr Angela Adrian is a dual qualified lawyer in Louisiana and the UK. Her specialisms include Intellectual Property, Information Technology, International Trade, and Criminal Law. She has two Masters degrees with distinction in Business & Management (Schiller International University) as well as in Commercial Law (University of Aberdeen). She obtained her Juris Doctorate at Loyola University, New Orleans. Dr Adrian published her PhD from Queen Mary, University of London as a monograph entitled "Law and Order in Virtual Worlds: Exploring Avatars, their Ownership and Rights". Currently, she is Chief Knowledge Officer of Icondia Ltd, an images rights company, co-author of the 4th edition of "Intellectual Property: Text and Essential Cases" (Australia), and Editor of the International Journal of Intellectual Property Management.

She's also a serial plagiarist.



Angela Adrian

Extent of misconduct

- *You only hear about the number of cases, the number of investigations or the number of allegations that they've had in informal discussions with people. It is only when it reaches very serious cases of research misconduct... that things become public. (Thomas [2010](#), p. 22)*

Extent of misconduct

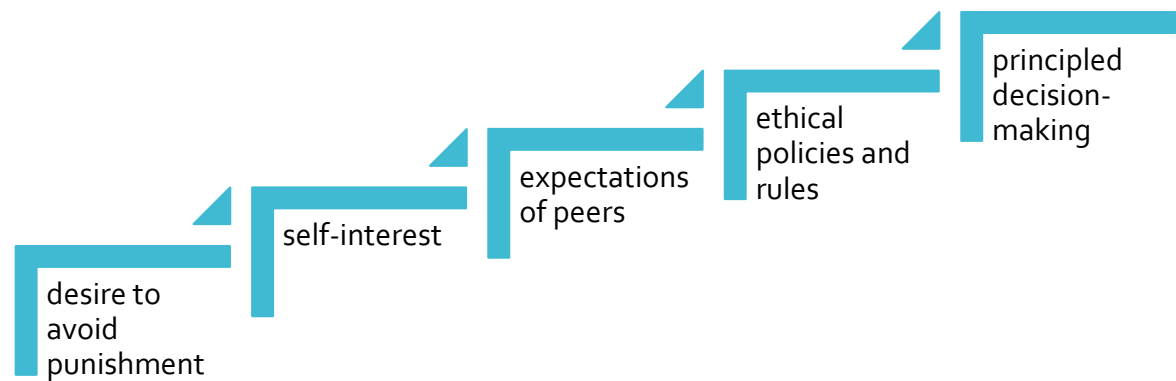
- UK
 - Godlee and Wager (2012)
 - survey of 2,700 British-based scientists and doctors
 - **Over 10% witnessed colleagues altering or fabricating data**
- US
 - Bedeian et al. (2010)
 - Responses 438 faculty in management in United States business schools
 - Over 70% reported knowledge of colleagues
 - **'withheld methodological details or results'** (79.2%)
 - **'selected only those data that support a hypothesis'** (77.6%)
 - **plagiarised** (72.1%)
 - **post-facto hypothesizing** (91.9%)
 - **duplicate publication** (86.2%)
 - accepted or assigned **ghost or gift authorship** (78.9%)

- RHD Plagiarism scandals
 - Brought down
 - cabinet ministers in Germany
 - president of Hungary
 - a vice-president of European Parliament
 - Troubled
 - Prime Minister of Romania
 - Undisturbed
 - claims part of Vladimir Putin's economics thesis lifted from 20 year old American management text (Sands, 2006)
 - Director of Thailand's National Innovation Agency, despite university concluding that 80% of his thesis copied
- The new normal?

Causes of misconduct?

- Bad apple
- Bad case
- Bad barrel
- Bad barrel-maker
- Bad checker
 - apple-checker
 - barrel-checker
 - barrel maker-checker

- Bad apple
 - individual's own cognitive moral development and ability to engage in ethical reasoning develops in sophistication over time, moving through decisions based on:



- Macfarlane (2008) identified six character 'traits' for researchers:

Reflexivity Humility
Resoluteness
Respectfulness Sincerity
Courage

- These need to develop as part of a researcher's identity formation and self-concept.
- Researchers need to
 - know what these values **mean**
 - be **motivated** to act accordingly, and also
 - have the appropriate **skills** to act accordingly.

- Bad case
 - Likelihood an unethical *choice* might be made might decline with the **moral intensity** of an issue (Jones, 1991):
 - *magnitude, probability and temporal immediacy* of harm
 - degree of *consensus* that an action might be wrong
 - the social, cultural and physical *proximity of the victim* to the act
 - degree of *concentration of the effect* of the act
 - If organisations can help researchers understand the consequences that flow from their behaviour, they might **influence**
 - calculative **decisions** their researchers make
 - impulsive **pathways** to ethical and unethical behaviour.

- Bad barrel
 - Cultures and climates might combine to create research environment within which egoism or even the 'moral seduction' of wrongdoing may prevail
 - Ethical conduct might be influenced by organisational **culture**
 - formal and informal control systems and policies
 - leadership (Crime and Misconduct Commission, 2013; Corruption and Crime Commission, 2016)
 - codes of conduct (and likelihood codes will be enforced)
 - Organisational work **climates** might emphasise
 - benevolence
 - established principles
 - and *not* self-interest

- Bad barrel-maker
 - Academics are under increasing pressure to produce research
 - Fear these pressures will corrode research integrity voiced in many countries
 - Uneven mix of policies and practices

Causes of misconduct?

- Bad checker
 - Weak and ineffective oversight regimes
 - **Australian Research Integrity Committee** reviews
 - processes and procedures used in investigations
 - reports to the research councils
 - does not
 - investigate research misconduct itself
 - comment on merits of an institution's decision
- Question how approach might advance research integrity given
 - **limited effectiveness and independence** of the current arrangements
 - **dearth of information** on the extent of research misconduct
 - **lack of coverage** of research in institutions that are not funded by NHMRC/ARC

Why does it matter to you?

- Care about others
 - Beneficence
 - Increase sum of good
 - Nonmaleficence
 - Don't harm others
- Research conducted with integrity might be more...
 - Accurate
 - No falsification or fabrication
 - Original
 - No plagiarism
 - Publishable



Initiatives

1. Educate

- Build capacity for ethical imagination
- Kalichman ([2012](#)) critical of approaches to adult education based on premise
 - research misconduct is simply fault of bad apples
 - single program can fix misconduct in every context.
- Disappointingly, many Australian universities have focused primarily upon risk management, bureaucratic systems, and sanctions in order to compel researcher compliance with national standards for research integrity
 - One short course from a well-respected national provider of leadership and management programs covered
 - requirements of the Australian Code
 - relationship between the Code and the disciplinary procedures within enterprise agreements
 - role of State integrity bodies
 - handling of allegations of misconduct
 - institutional risk management.

Hypothetical

- Patricia is a PhD student. Following a suggestion from her supervisor, Bullent, she writes an article for publication. Bullent provides extensive comments.
- The article is accepted subject to revision and, again, Bullent provides comments and hands over a draft of an article he is writing. Patricia uses material from this article and offers Bullent co-authorship. Should he accept?

- Bullent's second supervisor, Michael, points out that he always put his supervisor's name on any publication that came out of his thesis. What should Bullent do?

2. Resource reflective practice

- Institutional goals should link research integrity with research development and system performance
- organization's research integrity arrangements should
 - offer a positive research experience
 - be constructive in promoting good research
 - effective and efficient in ensuring responsible conduct, in a way that is proportional to risks and sensitivities...

- Think about how your institution supports responses to
 - Authorship
 - Conflicts of interest
 - Publication strategies
- *The framework should not be viewed as a box-ticking exercise of compliance, but rather underpinning and supporting a strong research culture. (Allen et al., 2014, p. 4)*



3. Build an empirical base

- Lack of research on research integrity
 - In Australia, no evidence of the effectiveness of any interventions.
- Why?
 - Area is new
 - Who funds it in Australia?
 - Who publishes it?
 - ERA



4. Communicate

- Researchers
 - Transparency of methodology and openness of data
- Regulators, administrators and researchers
 - Common endeavour
 - Easy exchange of ideas & views between regulators & researchers
 - Workshopping difficult issues
- Reject the adversarial culture of research ethics



- <http://www.ahrecs.com/>
 - Resources
 - Research Ethics Monthly blog

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Mark Israel

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Questions

- How might research integrity be promoted at your institution?
- How might you avoid creating an adversarial culture between researchers, research managers and regulators?
- How might you collectively uncover and learn from better practices elsewhere?