

Breaches of Scientific Integrity in Erasmus MC



Rikard Juttmann, MD PhD
Coordinator Scientific Integrity, Erasmus MC

Research Codes



Research Codes

- Academic integrity
- Intellectual property
- Patientdata and biomaterial

[http://www.erasmusmc.nl/research/
over-research/integriteit/](http://www.erasmusmc.nl/research/over-research/integriteit/)

Erasmus MC Scientific Integrity Officials

- Erasmus MC Confidential counsellor for academic integrity (Prof. Peter Koudstaal)



- Secretary confidential counsellor (Dr. Rikard Juttmann)



Breaches of scientific integrity according to the Erasmus MC Research Codes

Version 2014 still in preparation

Cheating (falsifying data; entering fictional data; data fabrication, plagiarism, theft of intellectual property)

Violation laws and regulations (WMO: informed consent, starting before approval METC, GCP/BROK; saving research data etc)

Questionable Research Practices (QRP):

Methodology misuse (secretly omitting unfavorable results, deliberately misusing statistical methods to achieve conclusions other than those justified by the data; deliberately interpreting results and conclusions falsely)

Authorship offenses (pretending to be an author or co-author, or deliberately omitting other authors)

Sloppy procedures

Cases since January 2011

N= ± 25:

Investigation committees: 4

Independent judge: 2

In addition ± 10 cases did not concern scientific integrity but personal conflicts

Such cases are referred to the Erasmus MC Mediator

<http://intranet.erasmusmc.nl/dipecs/50118/sectorHRMbeleidenadvies/mediation>

Proceedings

What happens in Erasmus MC in case of suspected academic misconduct?

Actors:

- The source ('whistleblower')
- The accused researcher
- The Confidential counselor and his secretary
- Dean/Board of directors/Rector
- Investigative Committee

The beginning

- The whistleblower visits the counselor and the secretary



Student

PhD student

Postdoc

(Assistant/associate) professor

Whistleblower

- Hesitation
- Fear
- Absolute protection





The accused researcher

Student

PhD student

Postdoc

(Assistant/associate) professor

Proceedings

The confidential counselor examines the report and evaluate whether the report is plausible and therefore admissible for processing (ontvankelijk)

“Smoking gun”

- The whistleblower produces some plausible evidence (preferably documents) of academic misconduct by the accused researcher!



Proceedings:

- The counselor informs the dean
- The dean informs the accused researcher
- The accused researcher may temporary be dispended from tasks
- The dean installs an investigative committee (or independent judge)

Investigative committee

- sometimes several months of investigation
- hearing the source, the accused researcher, a range of other people involved
- investigation of source documents: METC protocols, abstracts, publications, Case Report Forms (CRFs), patient dossiers (electronic and otherwise), and research databases.

Conclusions of several investigative committees

- Starting project before METC approval
- Inappropriate collection of scientific data (Sloppy methods)
- Absence of written informed consent
- Absence of a DSMB
- Adding authors without their permission.
- Blocking publications without good reason.
- Publications based on unreliable data were knowingly submitted
- Data fabrication (fill in results without having done the test)

Measures Dean / Board of directors / Rector

- Warning
- Reprimand
- Dismissal
- Ending professorship

- Inform patients

- Letters of concern to journals

- Further investigations

- Prevention program

Two types of academic misconduct

Type A

A planned construction of academic fraud: fictional research set up, fictional data etc. (Tilburg case)

Type B

The research was designed properly, but due to ***misfortune*** a 'pragmatic' solution is sought for: 'cutting corners'.
(Erasmus MC case)

Type A/B: similarities

Avoid criticism/academic interaction with peers

Isolation

Ambition

Type A/B: differences

Type A: most of us find the behavior strange

Type B: is much closer to most of us; we know the misfortune, the ambition, the pressure;

Type A: misleads his PhDs/students/other researchers

Type B: PhDs/students/others may get involved in the misconduct

Type B: involvement of students/PhDs

Type B “solves problems”, supports” his students/PhDs

Students/PhDs work along the same standards

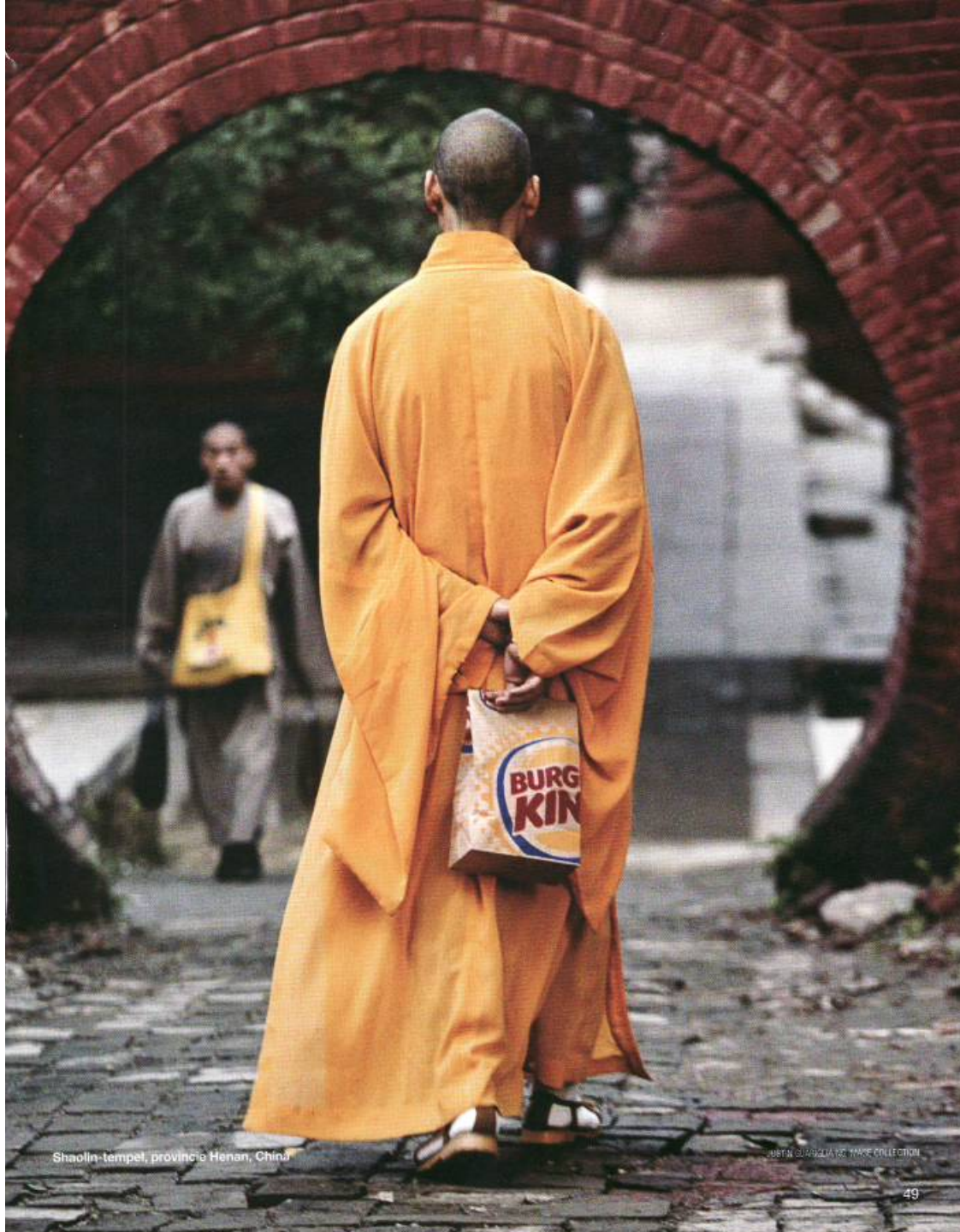
They are *trained* in this way of doing research (‘cutting corners becomes golden standard’)

Consequences for students/PhDs

MDs go into clinical training and leave science: what a relieve!

Whistleblowing is more difficult with type B than with type A: “conspiracy of silence”





Shaolin-tempel, provincie Henan, China

JUSTIN GUARDALUPE TRASE COLLECTION

Closure, questions?

Rikard Juttmann
r.juttmann@erasmusmc.nl

