

Event Summary: Special talk on “Factors that may contribute to research misconduct, a case study”



This event was taken place on 9th July 2019, 13.30-15.00 hr., at Chalermprakit room. We were privileged to have Ms. Zoë Hammatt as our speaker. Her profound experiences are evidenced in this research integrity field. Previously, she served as Director of the Division of Education and Integrity at the U.S. Office of Research Integrity. Currently, she is the president of Z Consulting, LLC, as well as the Research Integrity Officer at the University of Hawaii. Her lecture can be downloaded at the link, https://www.tn.mahidol.ac.th/research/News&Events/2019_07_09/2019_07_09_slide.pdf and summarized as followed;

- Integrity is fundamental to research

While the foundation of the word, integrity, centers on the ability to “trust” the research, a wide vocabulary can be used to define this word. There are several terms underlie the principle of integrity, which depends on different cultures. For example, in Japanese culture, they use the word “真心 (Magokoro)”, which means true heart. In Chinese, the word “诚信(chéng xìn)” is used to represent integrity. In Thai, the word “จริยธรรม (Jariyathum)” is meant for ethics. In accordance with it, there are four basic principles of medical ethics, which have already been defined as autonomy, justice, beneficence and non-maleficence. Hence, the differences between ethics and integrity can be seen.

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- FTM-ORIC is a model of integrity

The establishment of FTM-ORIC has taken place, 2 years ago, to facilitate FTM staffs in compliance with Thai laws. The code of good governance, issued by Mahidol University, has set a tone for this integrity issue. In a way, this issue can be integrated into our daily activity. Our integrity must constantly be reflected in our own research activity. Consequently, FTM, can receive public's trust in our research.

- Lessons learned

Major attempt was made as Singapore statement on research integrity (in 2010), which was the outcome from World Conference on Research Integrity. Four principles were derived (link can be found at <https://wcrif.org/documents/327-singapore-statement-a4size/file>). To stress the importance of this issue, Ms. Zoë had developed her own acronym as “ARC of Integrity”. The verbatim of Ms. Zoë's statement on “ARC of Integrity” is as followed; “Accountable Administrators take Appropriate Actions and are Attentive to All. Responsible Respectful Researchers serve as Role models. Community Coordinates to Contribute to a Culture of integrity and Communicates with Compassion.”

- Perspective from the US

Started from the public concerns about the transparency of grants funded by public money, Office of Research Integrity had been established by the US government. The works by this office include an effective oversight of research misconduct queries and allegations. If it was found guilty, the end findings of such case would be revealed to public via https://ori.hhs.gov/case_summary. Moreover, this office has been offered many useful infographics to educate about image processing (please refers to <https://ori.hhs.gov/infographics>). With respect to the U.S. 42 CFR 93, the meanings of Fabrication, Falsification, and Plagiarism (FFP) were marked.

- Research misconduct vs. FFP

However, the definition of research misconduct is often broader than FFP. There are many breaches of integrity, as there is still an infringement of research conduct. For example, these misconducts can be disguised as controversial topics as authorship, conflict of interest and mentorship. It is often the result of unfavorable research attention. This is why it is essential to have education and training toward these issues. Especially, both the face-to-face training as well as the superb supervision can play important key roles.

- Causes of research misconduct

There have been many articles published about the explanations toward research misconduct. In this presentation, Ms. Hammatt exemplified the potential characteristics of those who might involve in

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research misconduct. Some examples of these characters were absent-minded, neglected, racing, narcissistic and bullying. Ms. Hammatt attributed the research misconduct to many intricate aspects, such as poor mentorship, competitive pressures, individual psychology, individual circumstances and inadequate training.

- Stakeholders participation

It took every stakeholder to response to this issue. For example, administrators can start by create a systematized oversight. For PI researchers, they can be responsive and respectful role models, by evaluating raw data and be approachable for their research teammates. Everybody should be able to express themselves openly about integrity issues. It is vital to develop a culture of integrity, where the compassion, communication and collaboration are formulated in the research community.

For more pictures of the event, https://www.tn.mahidol.ac.th/th/th-news-event-view.php?news_id=4491