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- Omar Walid Muquebil Ali Al Shaban Rodríguez<sup>a,\*</sup>,  
Celia Rodríguez Turiel<sup>a</sup>, Sergio Ocio León<sup>b</sup>,  
Mario Javier Hernández González<sup>b</sup>, Manuel Gómez Simón<sup>b</sup>,  
María Aida Fernández Menéndez<sup>c</sup>
- <sup>a</sup> *Servicio de Psiquiatría, Hospital Universitario San Agustín, Avilés, Asturias, Spain*  
<sup>b</sup> *Centro de Salud Mental de Mieres, Mieres, Asturias, Spain*  
<sup>c</sup> *Monash University, Melbourne, Australia*
- \* Corresponding author.  
E-mail address: [muquebilrodriguez@gmail.com](mailto:muquebilrodriguez@gmail.com)  
(O.W. Muquebil Ali Al Shaban Rodríguez).  
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## Doppelgänger research? Considerations on self-citations<sup>☆</sup>



### ¿Investigación *doppelgänger*? Consideraciones sobre las autocitas

Dear Editor,

The consistent and appropriate use of citations of the work of other researchers, or even of one's own is an indicator of rigour in a scientific article, since this practice enables one's own paper to be contextualised in time and place.<sup>1</sup> It is even common to find citations of published papers of the same author in the references: self-citations. There are generally 2 reasons why self-citation is legitimate: the lack of studies to support one's own paper, due to the novelty of the study proposal and the researcher having completed a specific line of research.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, the citations of the scientific journals are evaluated through metrics whose results provide researchers certain position and benefits (e.g. Impact factor, Eigenfactor). However there are current impact measures that exclude self-citations and enable more appropriate evaluation.<sup>3</sup>

The bibliometric indicators show the positioning of a journal and the scope of the researchers, based on the number of citations made of the scientific papers of a researcher (not a team). Therefore it is an indicator of the influence of an author in the academic area (the h-index, for example). The h-index in particular, is vulnerable to manipulation and the abuse of self-citations is a common example.<sup>4</sup>

Overuse of self-citations for instrumental purposes is an ethical failing that is difficult to penalise or counteract. It is even used to enhance the appearance of the authors' impact, referencing previous papers unjustifiably in order to increase their citations and using superfluous self-citations in their studies. This implies, since they are largely not specific papers, poor conduct on the part of the authors who are contaminating the scientific literature for their own ends of promotion, financial reward and the benefits of institutional representation. But these citations leave a message to less experienced and/or new researchers on how acceptable ethically questionable behaviour can be.

Therefore, drafting scientific papers is a requirement concerning the empirical value of their sources and a habit for researchers since it coincides with the concept of cumulative growth of science. This means that the accumulation of knowledge is due to new advances or reformulations of previously cited findings.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, the abusive and indiscriminate use of self-citations is not convergent with the scientific field since it does not produce new knowledge, and even less so in the ethical sense, since it is the use of publication for self gain. It is the duty of the journals to fine-tune rigorous review processes of manuscripts to prevent this malpractice from continuing.

## Authorship

ACL and APJ participated in the conception and design of the study, the draft article or critical review of the intellectual content and the definitive approval of the version presented.

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Anthony Copez-Lonzoy<sup>a,\*</sup>, Angel Paz-Jesús<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Universidad de San Martín de Porres, Lima, Peru

<sup>b</sup> Instituto Peruano de Orientación Psicológica, Lima, Peru

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: [anthonycopez@yahoo.es](mailto:anthonycopez@yahoo.es)

(A. Copez-Lonzoy).

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## Collaborative opportunities for psychiatric trainees and young psychiatrists in Europe: The Early Career Psychiatrists Committee of the European Psychiatric Association<sup>☆</sup>



### Oportunidades colaborativas para los médicos residentes y psiquiatras jóvenes en Europa: el Early Career Psychiatrists Committee de la European Psychiatric Association

Dear Director,

In the past century, biological, psychological and social sciences have brought significant progresses to psychiatry, building it is a broad medical specialty, closely linked to somatic medicine, psychology and society. Many psychiatrists early in their career have understood that it is easier to face these challenges in a collaborative way, and therefore there has been in the last decades a growth of local and national associations of psychiatric trainees and early career psychiatrists across Europe.

In 2007, the European Psychiatric Association (EPA) has integrated in its programme the “Young Psychiatrists Committee”, an informal network of young psychiatrists, most of them past representatives of the European Federation of Psychiatric Trainees (EFPT). This Committee since 2010 has been known as the Early Career Psychiatrists Committee (ECPC).<sup>1</sup>

EPA has been making remarkable efforts towards supporting early career psychiatrists’ education and participation in scientific congresses, promoting their professional growth and integration into the international professional community. Likewise, early career psychiatrists contribute to EPA

with their motivation, enthusiasm and creative ideas, proving this initiative as an effective win-win cooperation.

### Why the early career psychiatrists committee?

You may consider joining the network of European Early Career Psychiatrists if you are a trainee in psychiatry, or if your work experience does not exceed 5 years from completion of professional training or your age is under 40. Your membership in the network will promote fruitful cooperation with other young psychiatrists sharing similar education and research interests. EPA promotes early career psychiatrists in developing networks, mentoring, and academic opportunities. Furthermore EPA provides young psychiatrists with an opportunity to voice their opinions in regard to training, research and practice standards as well as empowering them in their professional development and career progress.

### Activities

The ECPC activities include four task forces – research, publications, professional development, and meetings and associations.

The “Research Task Force” aims to promote international scientific projects in European countries and to facilitate young psychiatrists to develop research skills. The task force has published numerous papers in peer-reviewed journals. In addition, it provides assistance to find necessary resources to launch research activities.

The “Publications Task Force” focuses on various online educational materials posted on the EPA official website. One major outcome has been the publication of two books written by early career psychiatrists.

The “Professional Development Task Force” cooperates with different organizations to hold courses, workshops, seminars and other educational activities, such as the Gaining Experience Programme. In addition, the Task Force conducts relevant surveys to assess young psychiatrists’ needs.

Last, but certainly not the least, the “Task Force on Meetings and Associations” collaborates actively with other organizations such as the Early Career Psychiatrists Section of the World Psychiatric Association (WPA), the European Federation of Psychiatric Trainees (EFPT)<sup>2</sup> and the Young

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