Ethics and Reviewing

- In a conference of any size, weird boundary cases will definitely happen.
  - We had ten or so issues of dual submissions.
  - Two significant cases involving plagiarism.
- It's important to treat tough cases ethically and fairly.
- http://publicationethics.org/

International Standards

Summary

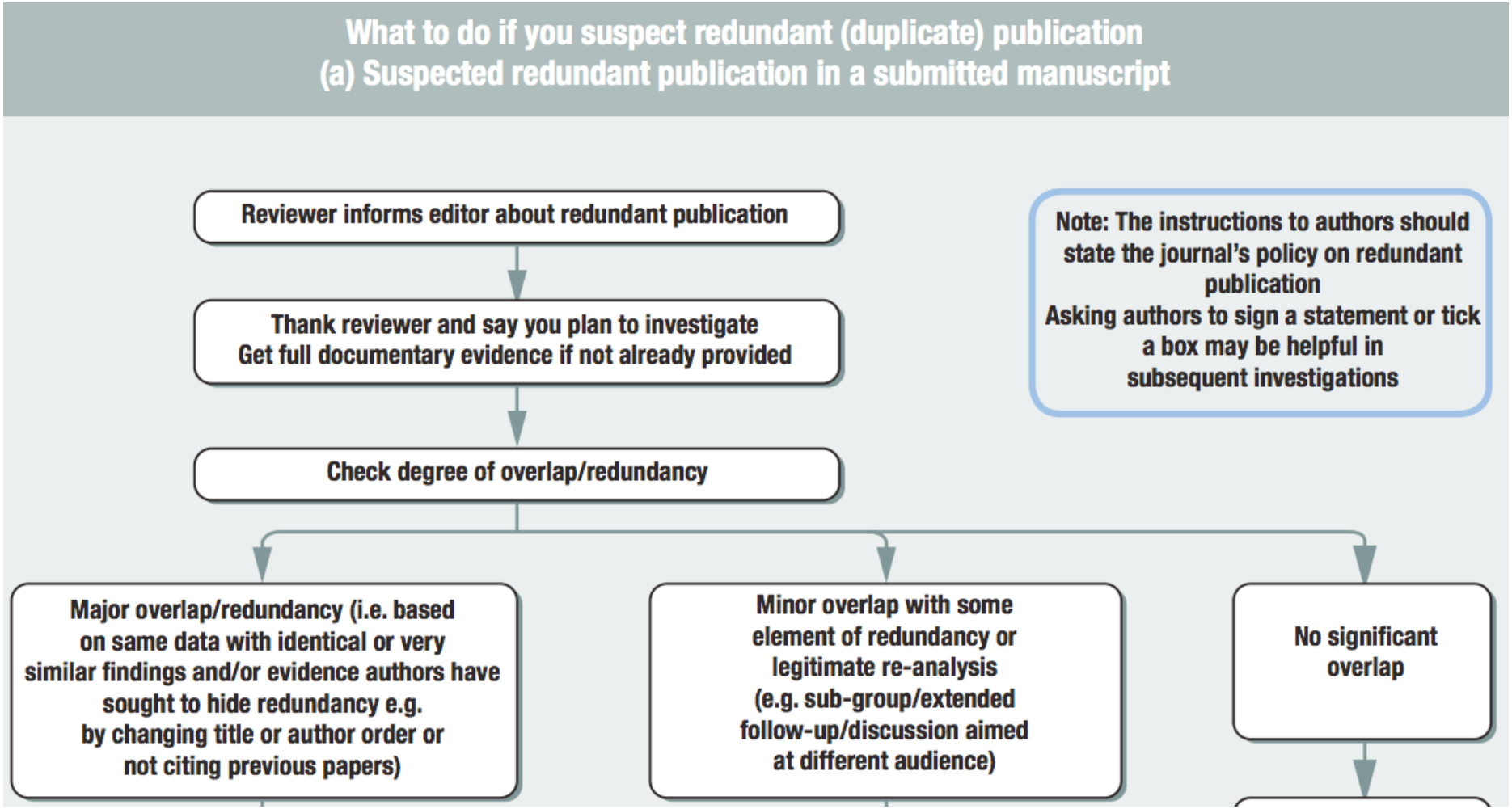
- Editors are accountable and should take responsibility for everything they publish
- Editors should make fair and unbiased decisions independent from commercial consideration and ensure a fair and appropriate peer review process
- Editors should adopt editorial policies that encourage maximum transparency and complete, honest reporting
- Editors should guard the integrity of the published record by issuing corrections and retractions when needed and pursuing suspected or alleged research and publication misconduct
- Editors should pursue reviewer and editorial misconduct
- Editors should critically assess the ethical conduct of studies in humans and animals
- Peer reviewers and authors should be told what is expected of them
- Editors should have appropriate policies in place for handling editorial conflicts of interest

Authors

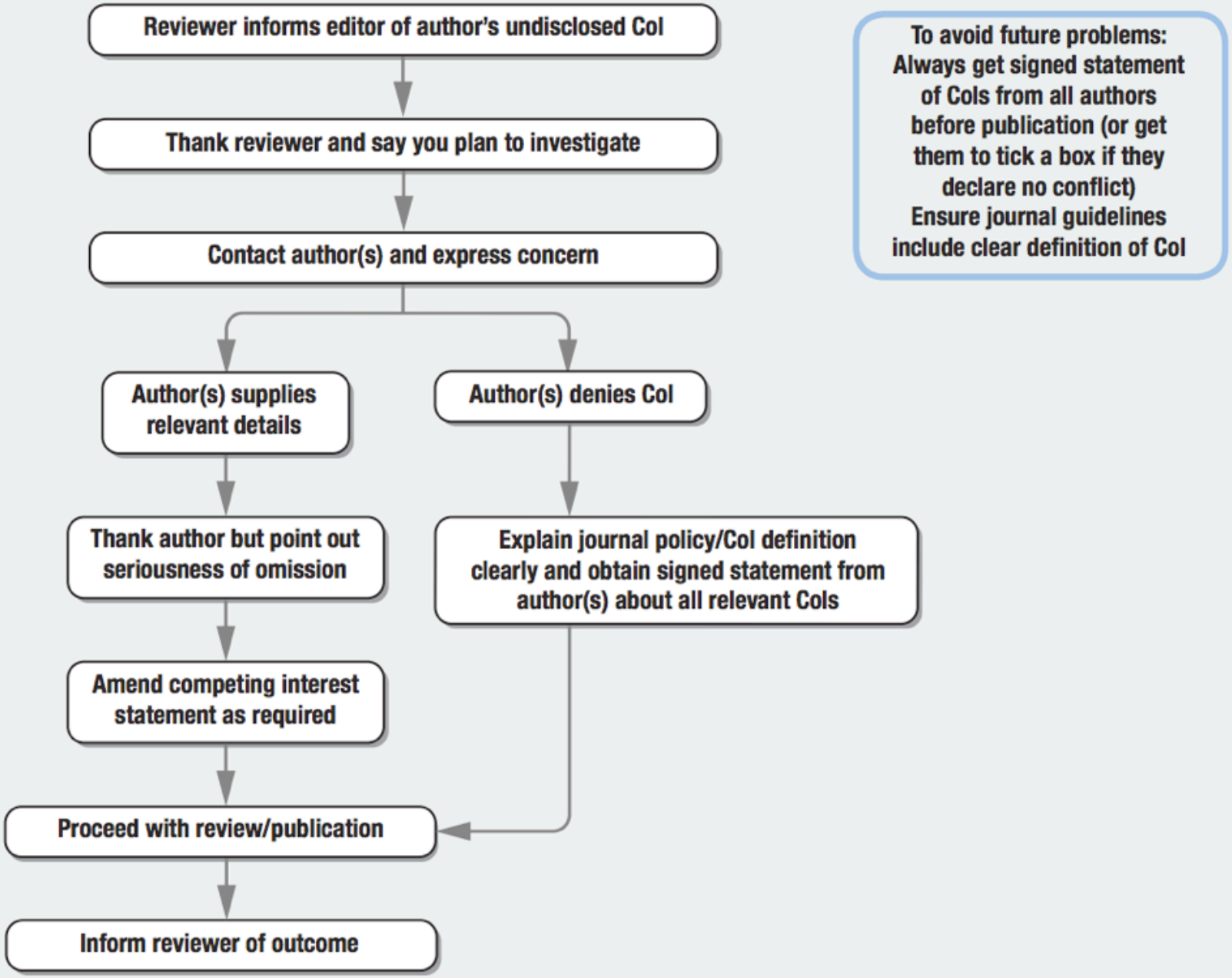
- **Summary**
- The research being reported should have been conducted in an ethical and responsible manner and should comply with all relevant legislation.
- Researchers should present their results clearly, honestly, and without fabrication, falsification or inappropriate data manipulation.
- Researchers should strive to describe their methods clearly and unambiguously so that their findings can be confirmed by others.
- Researchers should adhere to publication requirements that submitted work is original, is not plagiarised, and has not been published elsewhere.
- Authors should take collective responsibility for submitted and published work.
- The authorship of research publications should accurately reflect individuals' contributions to the work and its reporting.
- Funding sources and relevant conflicts of interest should be disclosed.

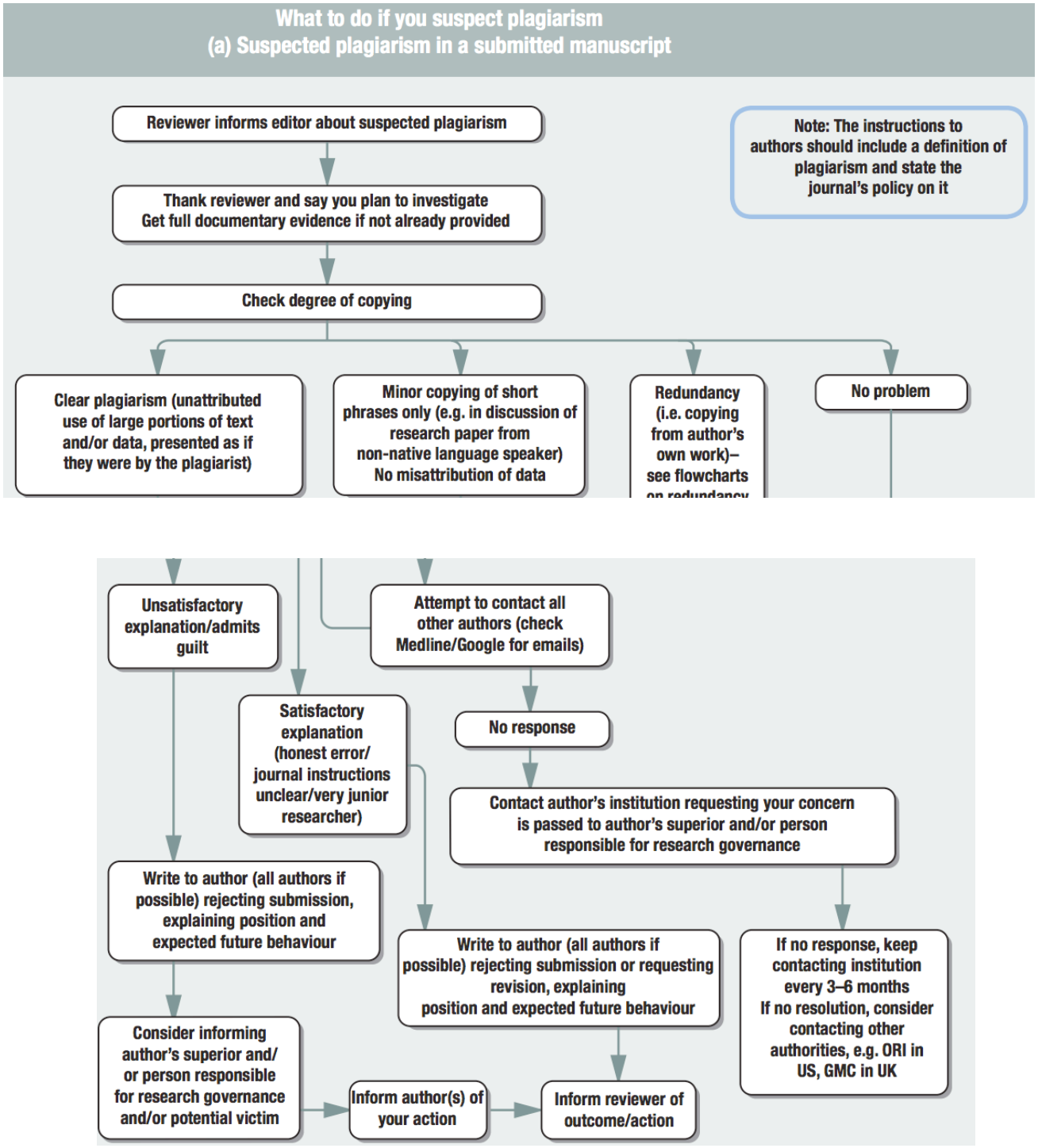
Flowcharts

Flowcharts provide guidance for handling sticky issues.



What to do if a reviewer suspects undisclosed conflict of interest (CoI) in a submitted manuscript




What to do if you suspect plagiarism
(a) Suspected plagiarism in a submitted manuscript
Reviewer informs editor about suspected plagiarism
Thank reviewer and say you plan to investigate
Get full documentary evidence if not already provided
Check degree of copying
Note: The instructions to authors should include a definition of plagiarism and state the journal's policy on it
Clear plagiarism (unattributed use of large portions of text and/or data, presented as if they were by the plagiarist)
Minor copying of short phrases only (e.g. in discussion of research paper from non-native language speaker)
No misattribution of data
Redundancy (i.e. copying from author's own work)– see flowcharts
No problem
Unsatisfactory explanation/admits guilt
Attempt to contact all other authors (check Medline/Google for emails)
Satisfactory explanation (honest error/ journal instructions unclear/very junior researcher)
No response
Contact author's institution requesting your concern is passed to author's superior and/or person responsible for research governance
Write to author (all authors if possible) rejecting submission, explaining position and expected future behaviour
Write to author (all authors if possible) rejecting submission or requesting revision, explaining position and expected future behaviour
If no response, keep contacting institution every 3–6 months
If no resolution, consider contacting other authorities, e.g. ORI in US, GMC in UK
Consider informing author's superior and/ or person responsible for research governance and/or potential victim
Inform author(s) of your action
Inform reviewer of outcome/action

Take Away

- Reviewers:
  - Not your call. Bump it up a level.
  - Ensures uniform handling across the conference.
  - Program chairs bear responsibility and need to know what's going on.