

Ethical Considerations

What we will cover:

1. Before agreeing to review
2. Research ethics
3. Publication ethics





1. Before Agreeing to Review

*Can I provide an
unbiased review?*

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1. **Unintentional biases**
2. Conflicts of interest
3. Expertise
4. Confidentiality
5. Fairness
6. Timeliness

- Unintentional favouritism
- Gender, Race, Geography, Institutions
- Methods of topics of study
- Follow a structured process



*Do I have any
conflicts of interest?*

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1. Unintentional biases
2. **Conflicts of interest**
3. Expertise
4. Confidentiality
5. Fairness
6. Timeliness

- Avoid reviewing collaborators and colleagues
- Avoid reviewing competing papers



*Am I an expert in
this field?*

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1. Unintentional biases
2. Conflicts of interest
3. **Expertise**
4. Confidentiality
5. Fairness
6. Timeliness

- You do not have to be expert at everything
- Be confident about your knowledge
- Be honest about your abilities



“Overall the results are clear and well written. I am unable to comment on the Kaplan Meier curve plot as this is beyond the scope of my statistical knowledge.”





*Can I maintain
confidentiality?*

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1. Unintentional biases
2. Conflicts of interest
3. Expertise
4. **Confidentiality**
5. Fairness
6. Timeliness

- Don't disclose sensitive information
- Don't enable plagiarism
- Do consult colleagues for specific advice
- Do obtain permission for co-reviews



*Can I provide a fair
and constructive
review?*



1. Unintentional biases
2. Conflicts of interest
3. Expertise
4. Confidentiality
5. **Fairness**
6. Timeliness

- Be honest and critical
- Be polite and constructive



*Can I meet the
deadline?*

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1. Unintentional biases
2. Conflicts of interest
3. Expertise
4. Confidentiality
5. Fairness
6. **Timeliness**

- Be realistic about your time
- Discuss an extension if necessary
- Help speed up science!
- Be sure to submit on time





2. Research Ethics

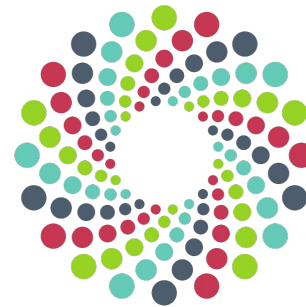
1. Data sharing
2. Transparent funding
3. Subject treatment

- Data-sharing
- Funding transparency
- Treatment of human and animal subjects



1. Data sharing
2. Transparent funding
3. Subject treatment

- Does the journal require open data?
- Is it provided?



figshare



1. Data sharing
2. **Transparent funding**
3. Subject treatment

- Look for a funding statement
- Look for a conflict of interest statement
- Could they have influenced the paper?



1. Data sharing
2. Transparent funding
3. **Subject treatment**

- Did the review board approve the study?
- Did participants provide consent?
- Are live-animal experiments necessary?
- Were field study permits obtained?





3. Publishing Ethics

1. **Plagiarism**
2. Data fabrication
3. Image manipulation

- Does the passage look familiar?
- Perform a web search
- Author's own work cannot be copied
- Short passages must be quoted



“Probiotics are live microorganisms that, when administered in adequate amounts, confer a health benefit on the host”



1. **Plagiarism**
2. Data fabrication
3. Image manipulation

- Acceptable reuse:
 - Short descriptions of methods
 - Cell line reporting
 - Analysis tool description



1. Plagiarism

2. Data fabrication
3. Image manipulation

- Figures must be fully cited
- Permission may be required

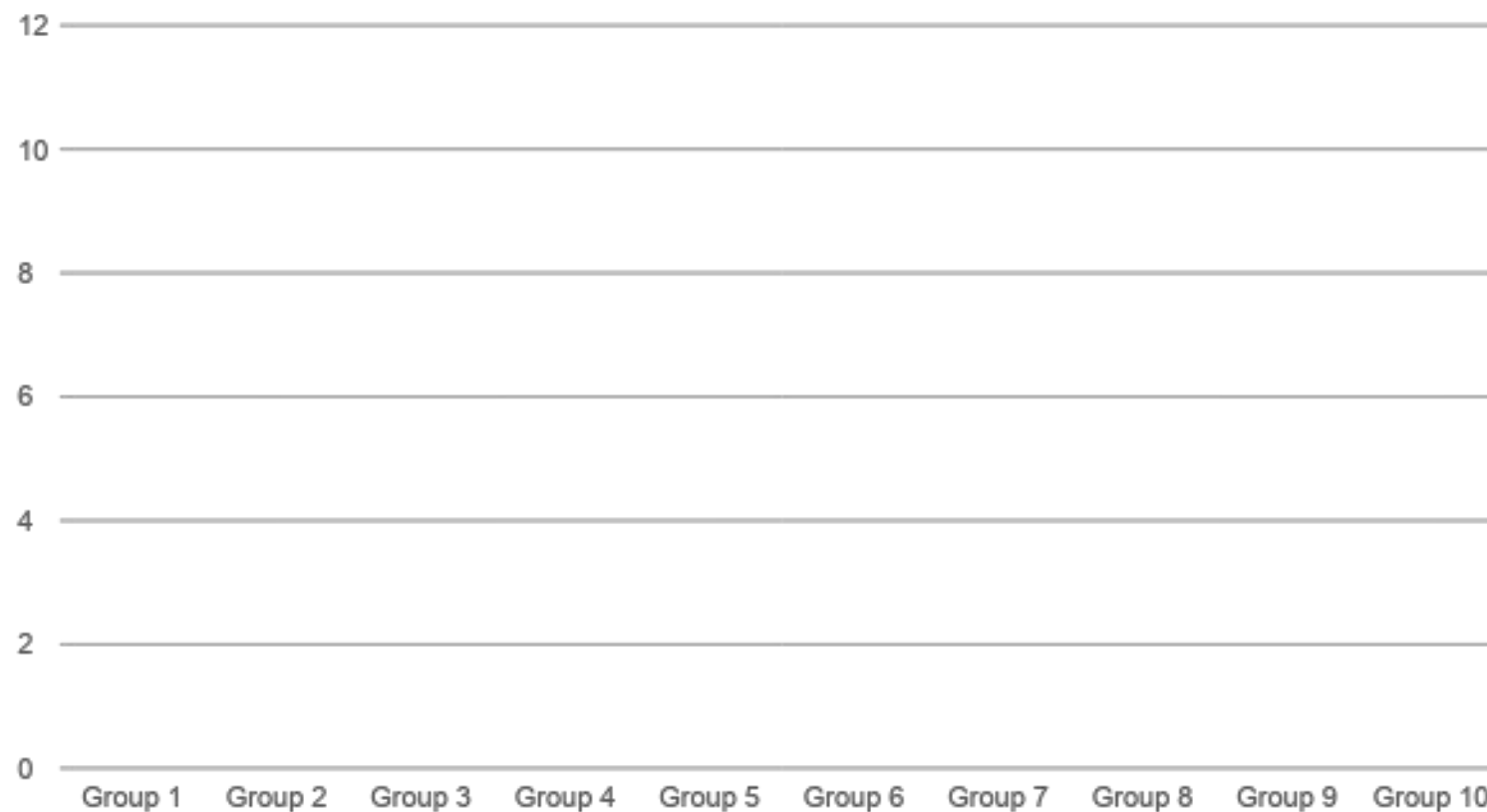


1. Plagiarism
2. **Data manipulation**
3. Image manipulation

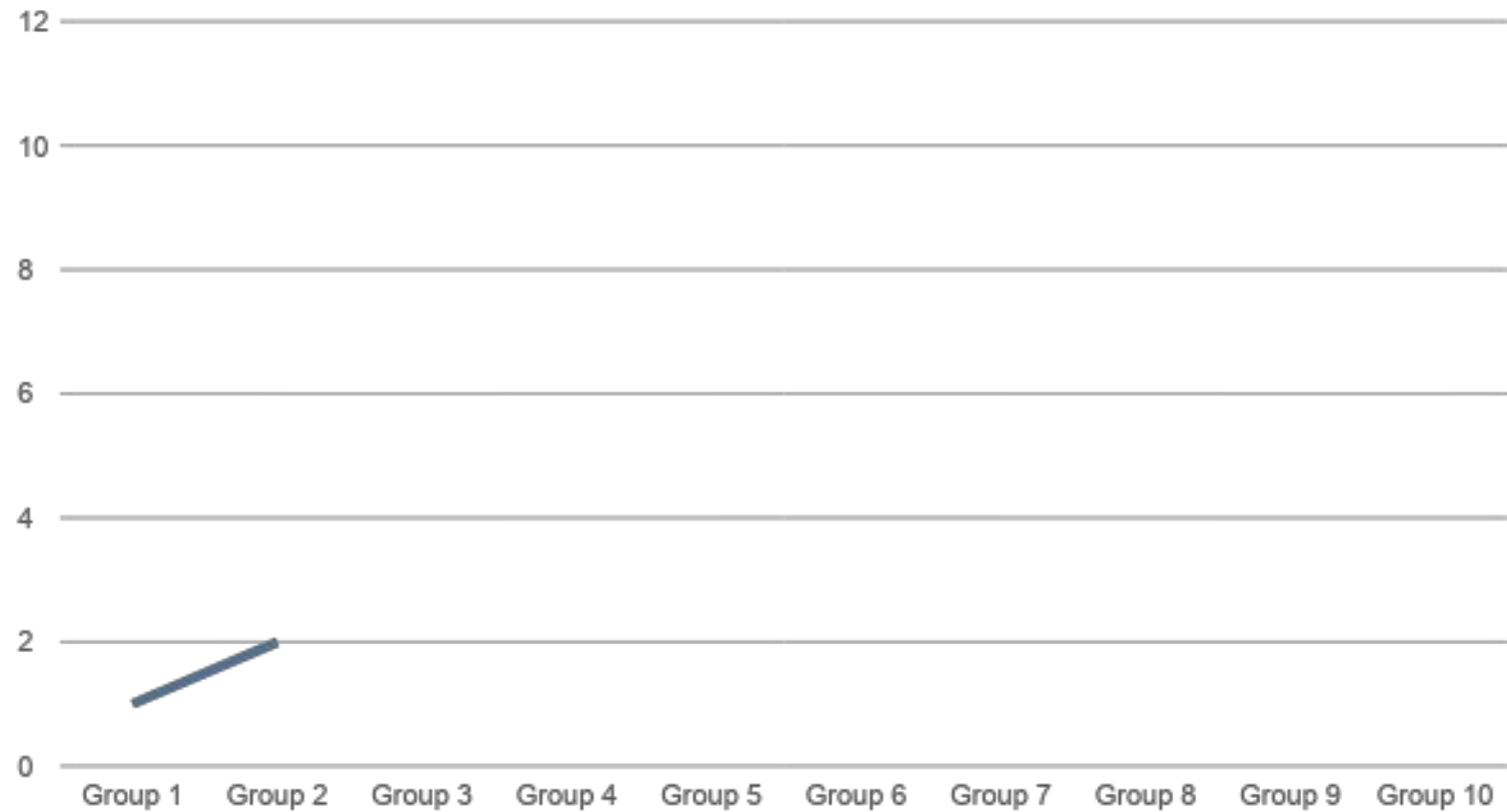
- Fabrication is the invention of data
- Falsification is the alteration of real data



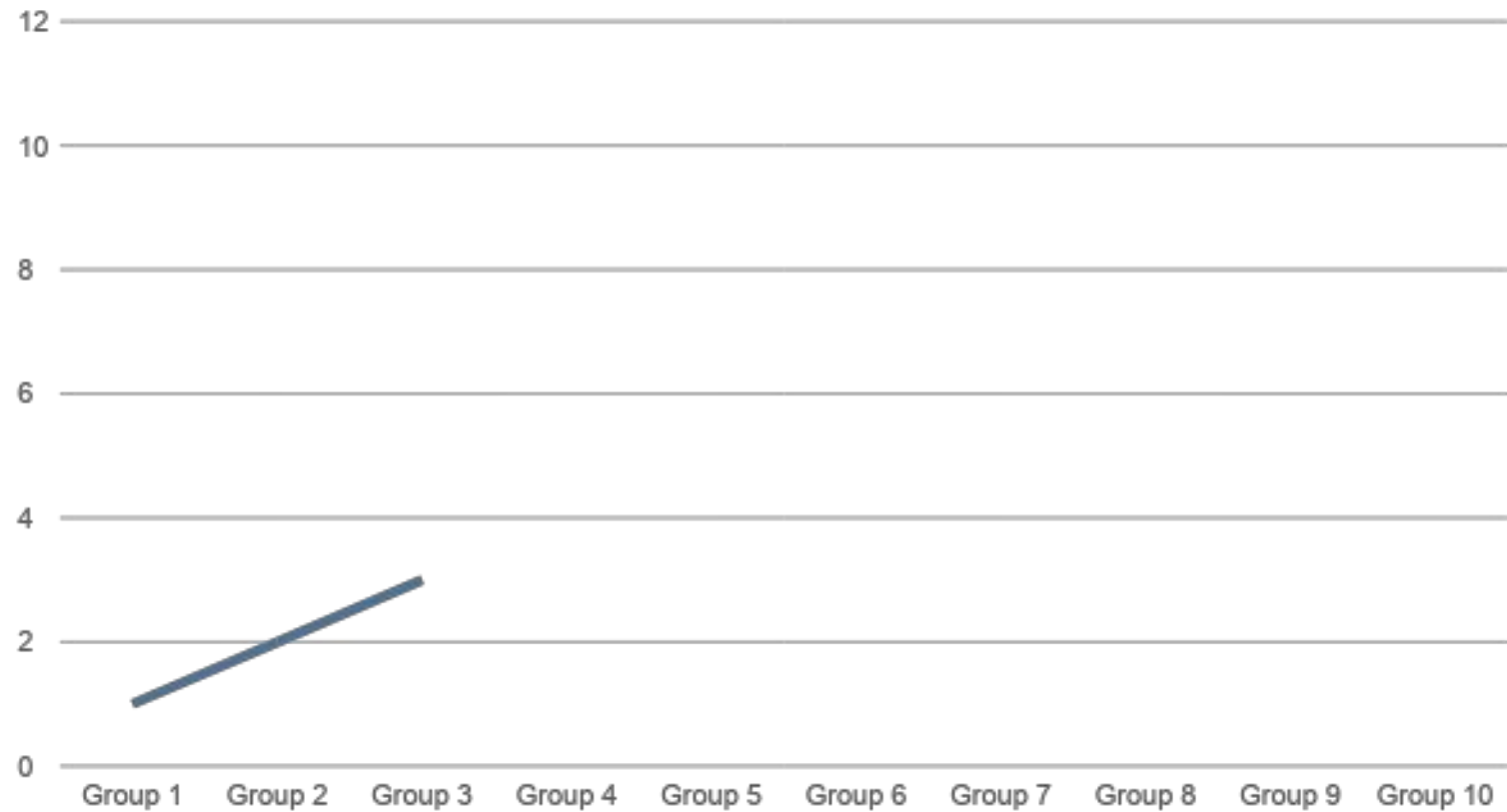
- 1. Plagiarism
- 2. Data manipulation
- 3. Image manipulation



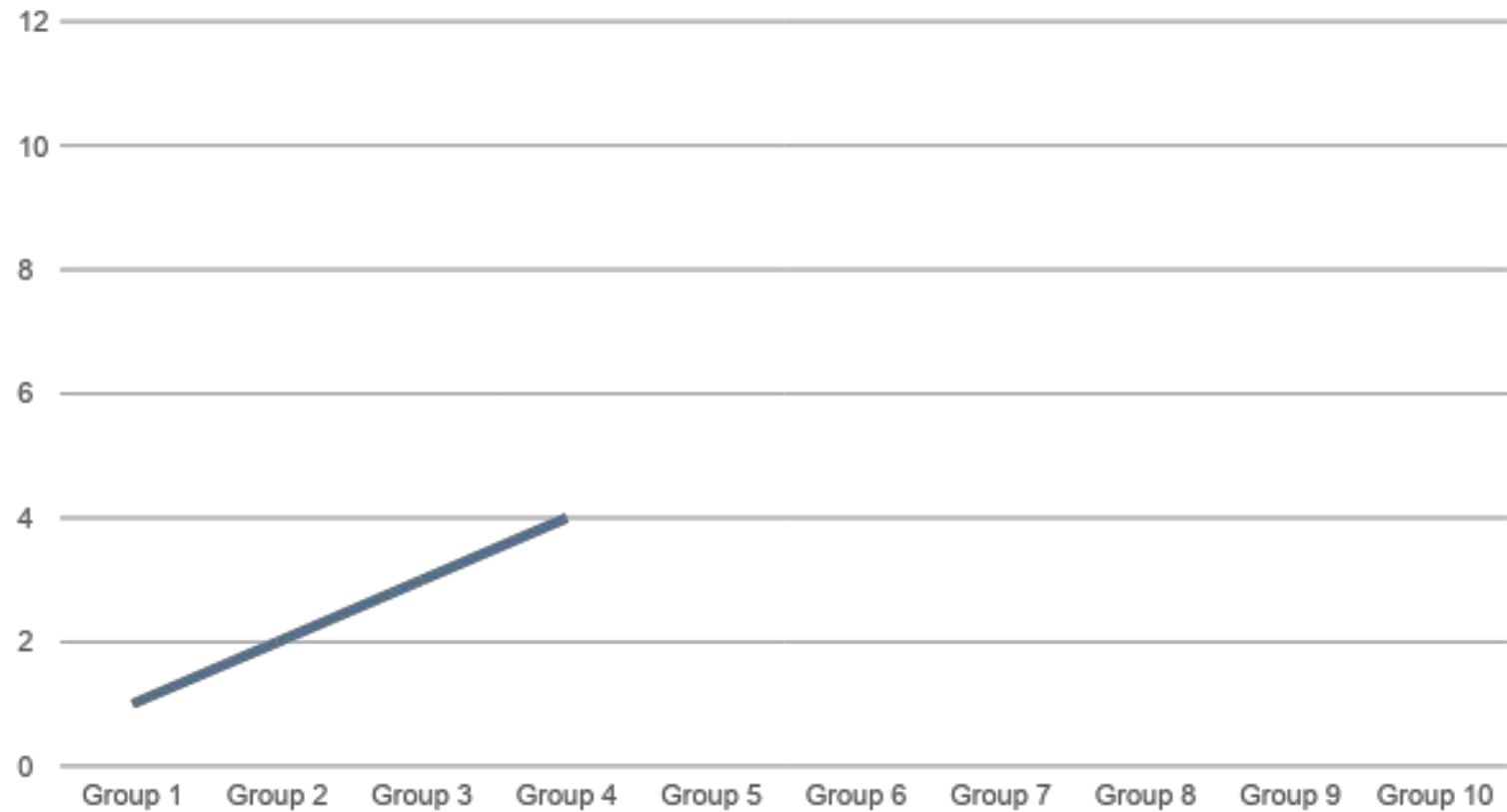
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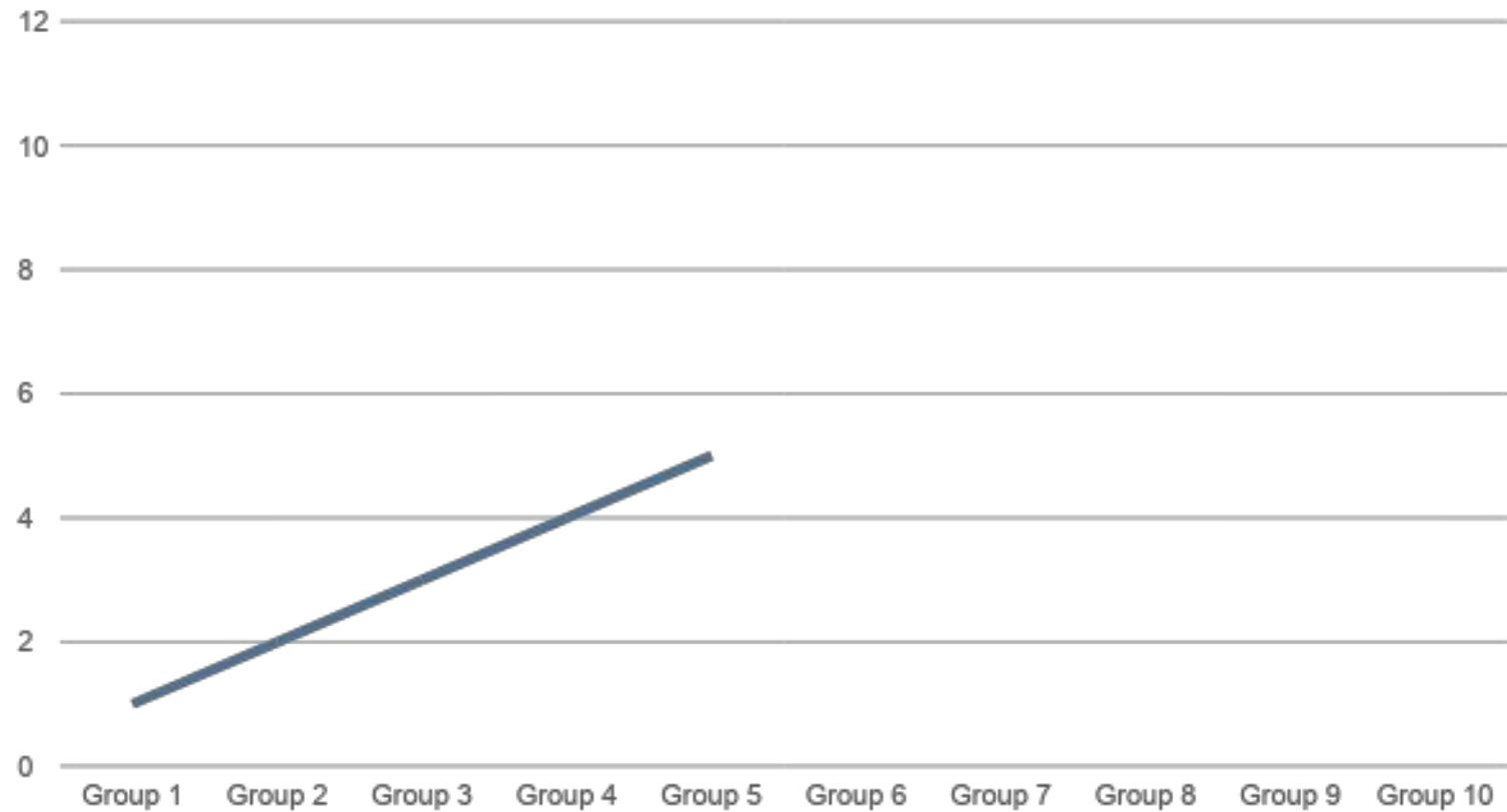
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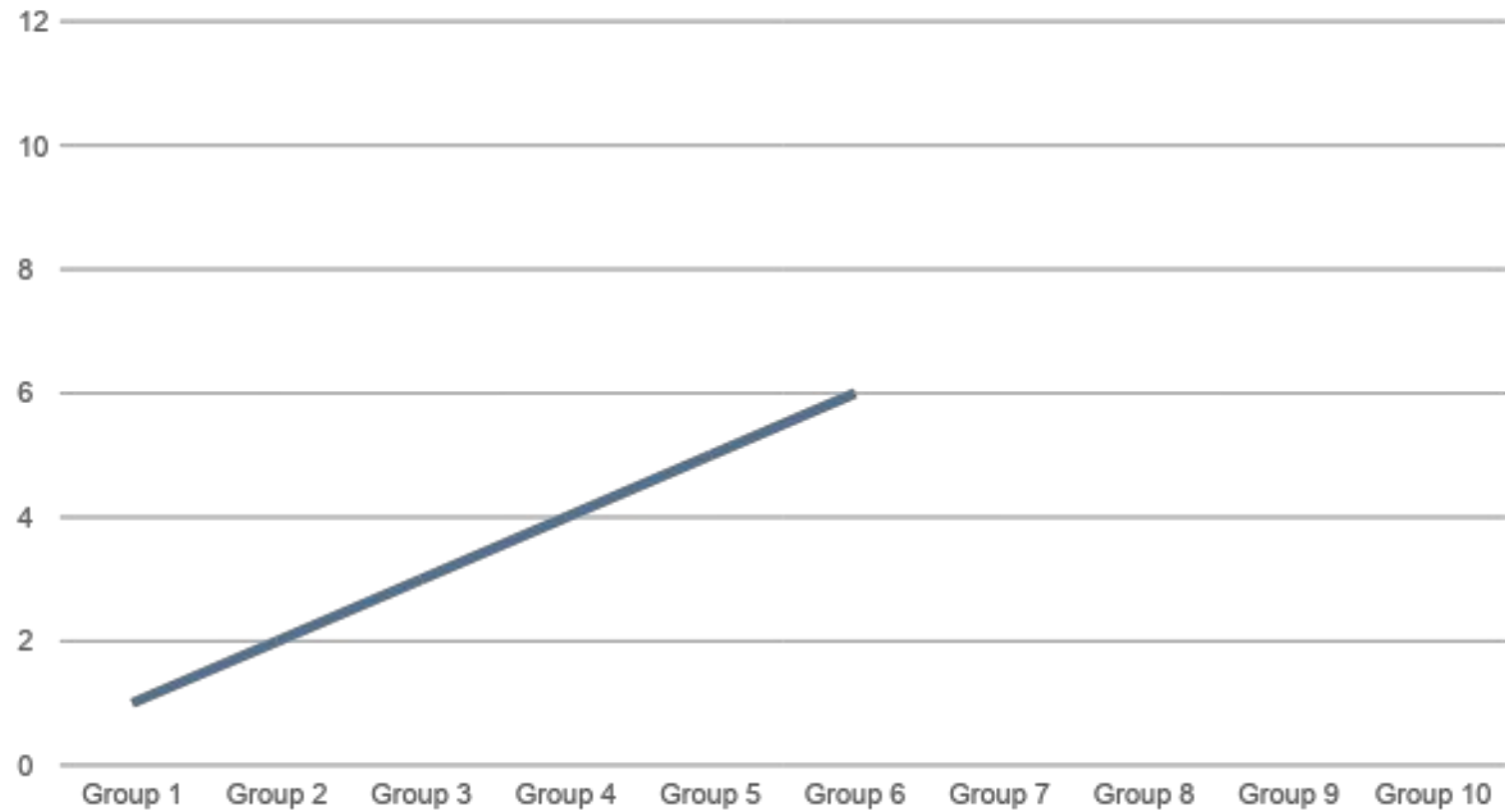
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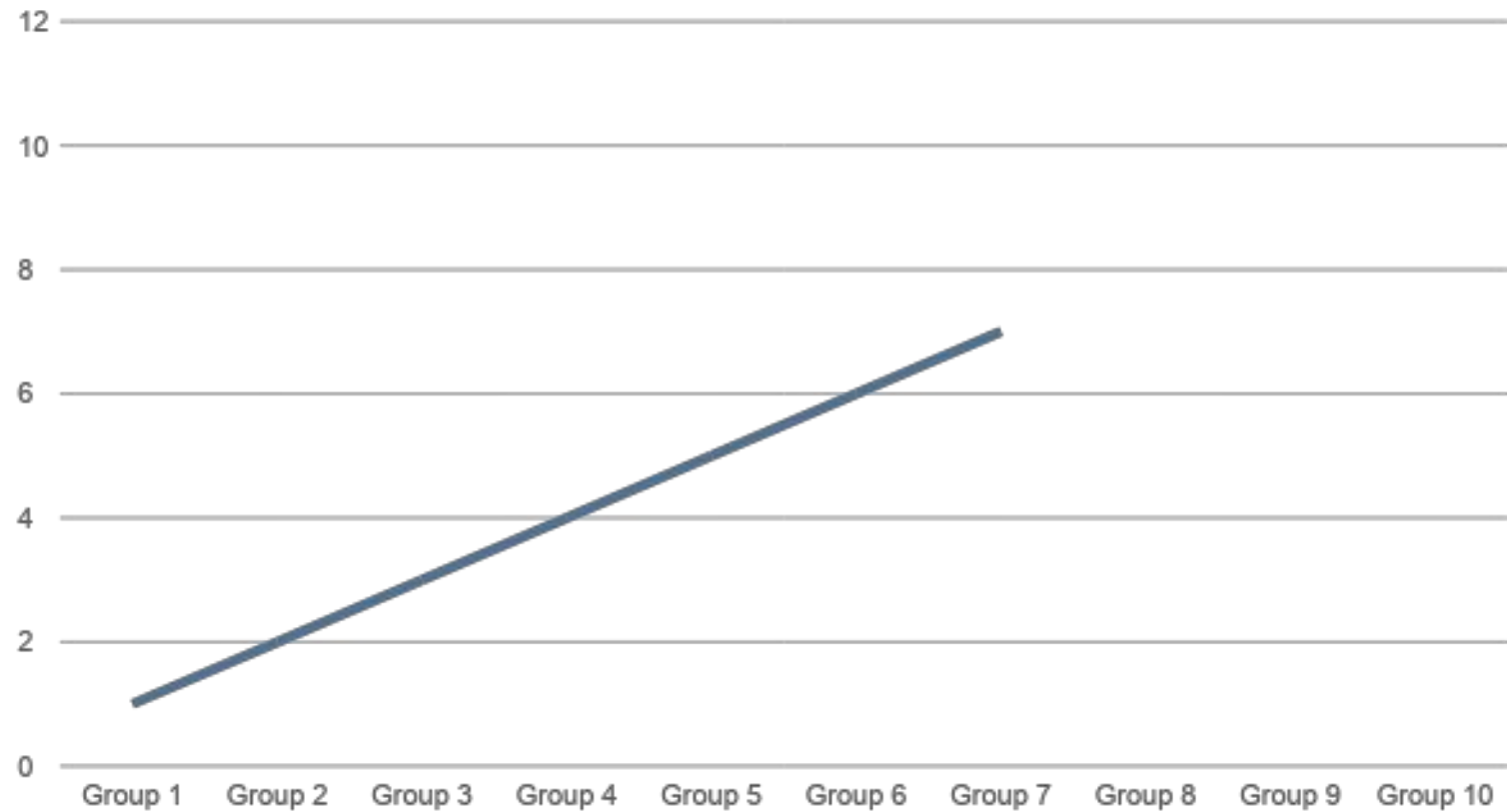
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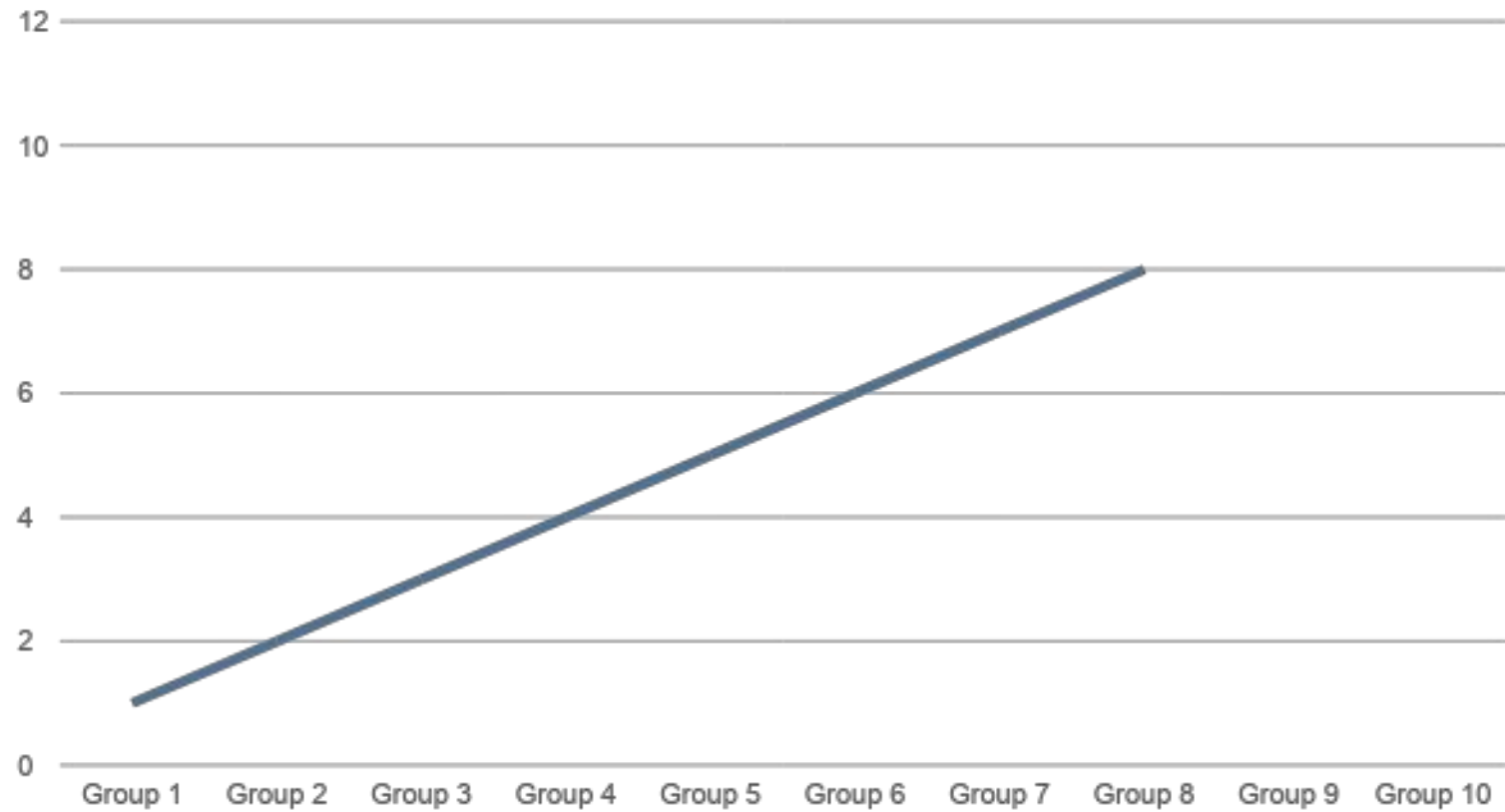
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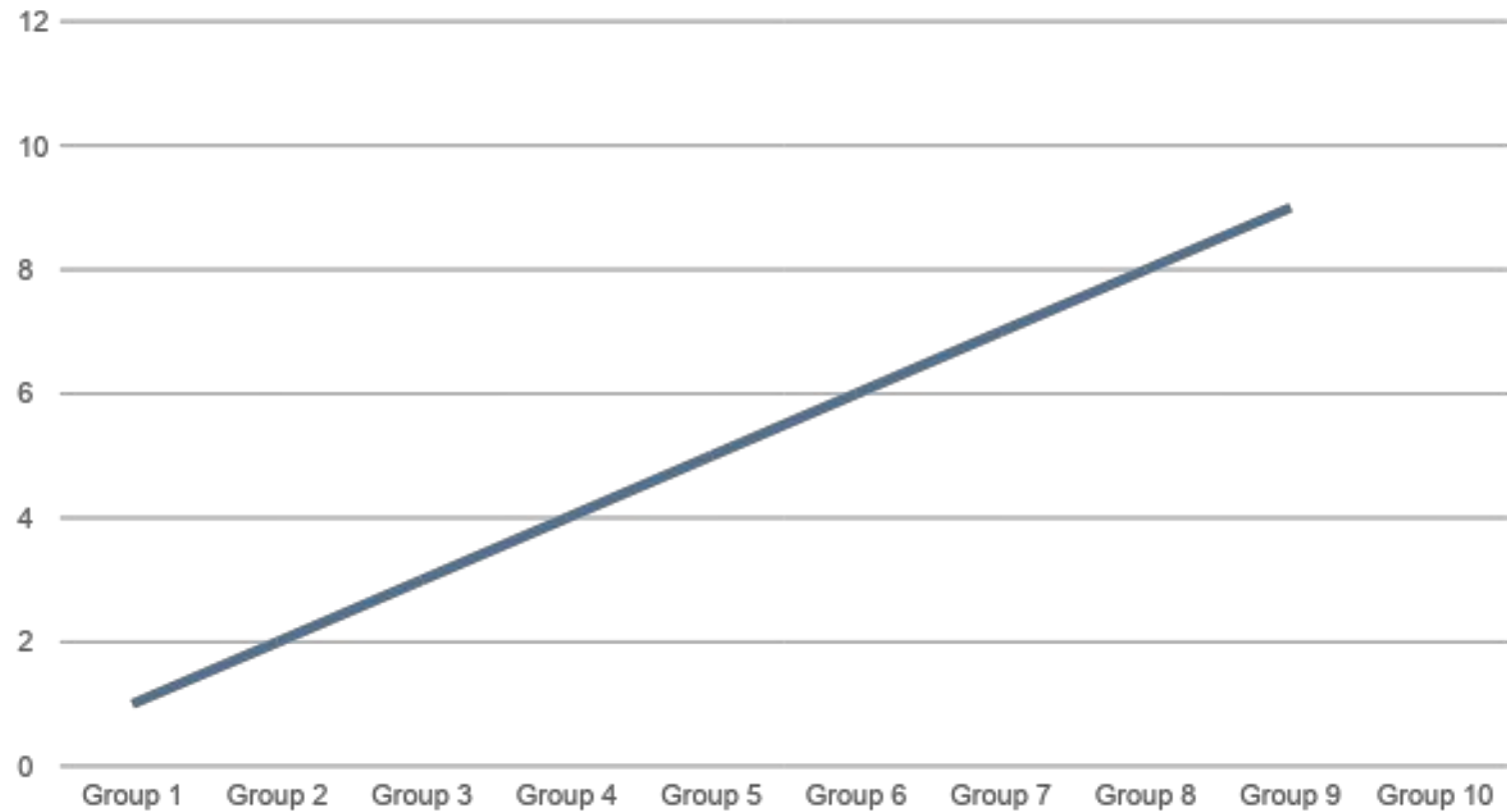
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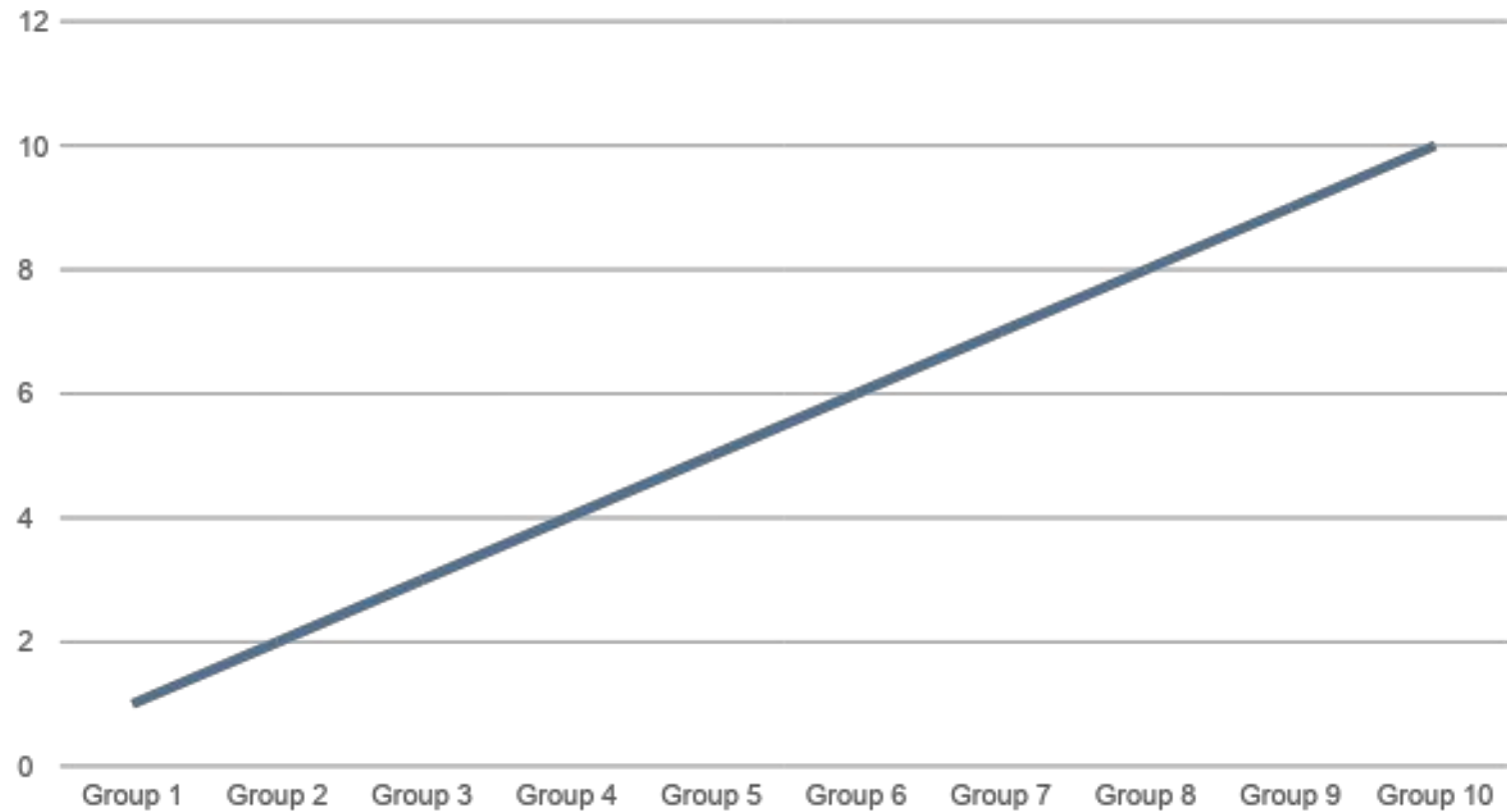
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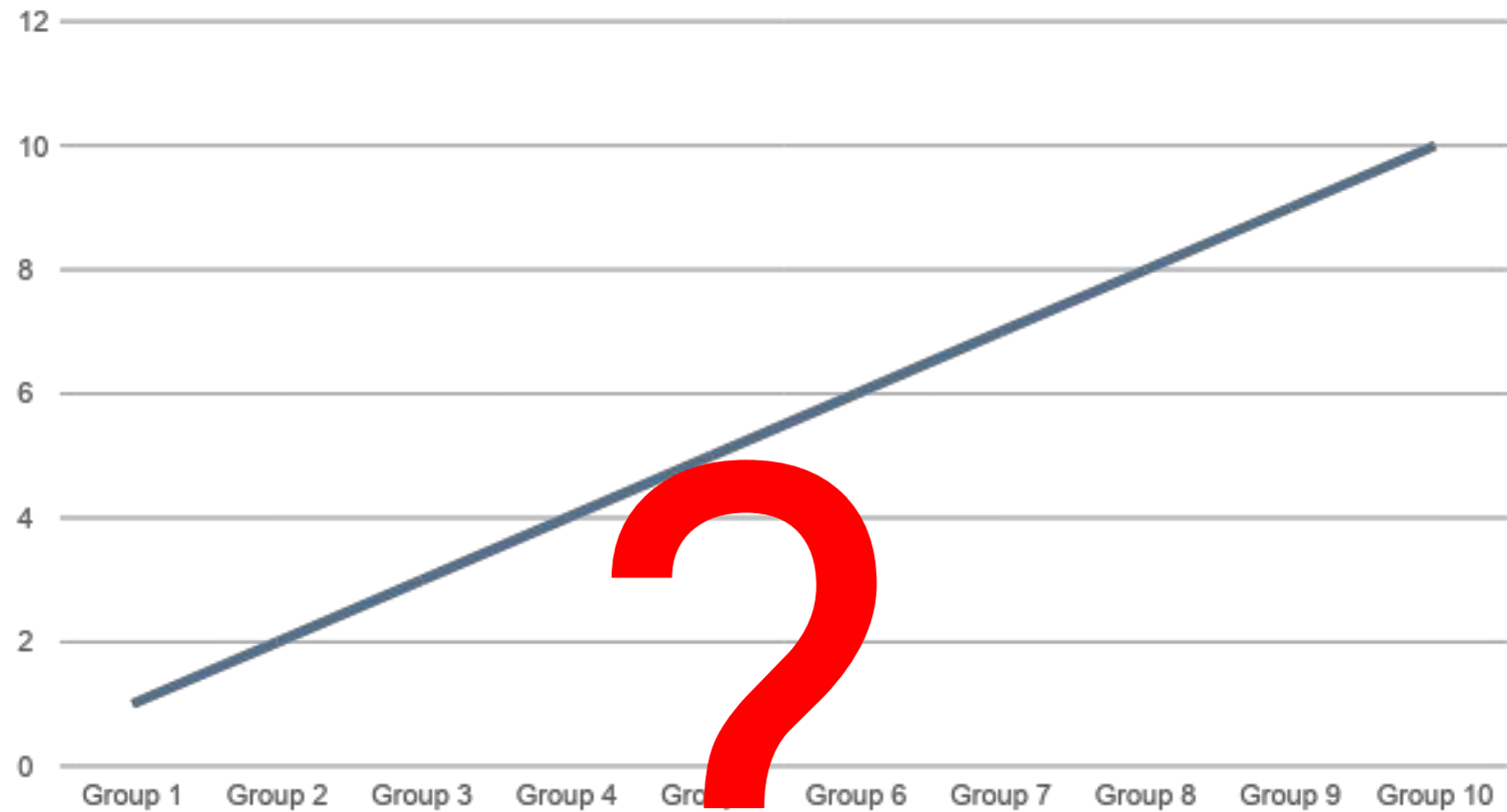
1. Plagiarism
2. Data manipulation
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1. Plagiarism
2. **Data manipulation**
3. Image manipulation



- 1. Plagiarism
- 2. Data manipulation
- 3. Image manipulation



1. Plagiarism
2. Data fabrication
3. **Image manipulation**

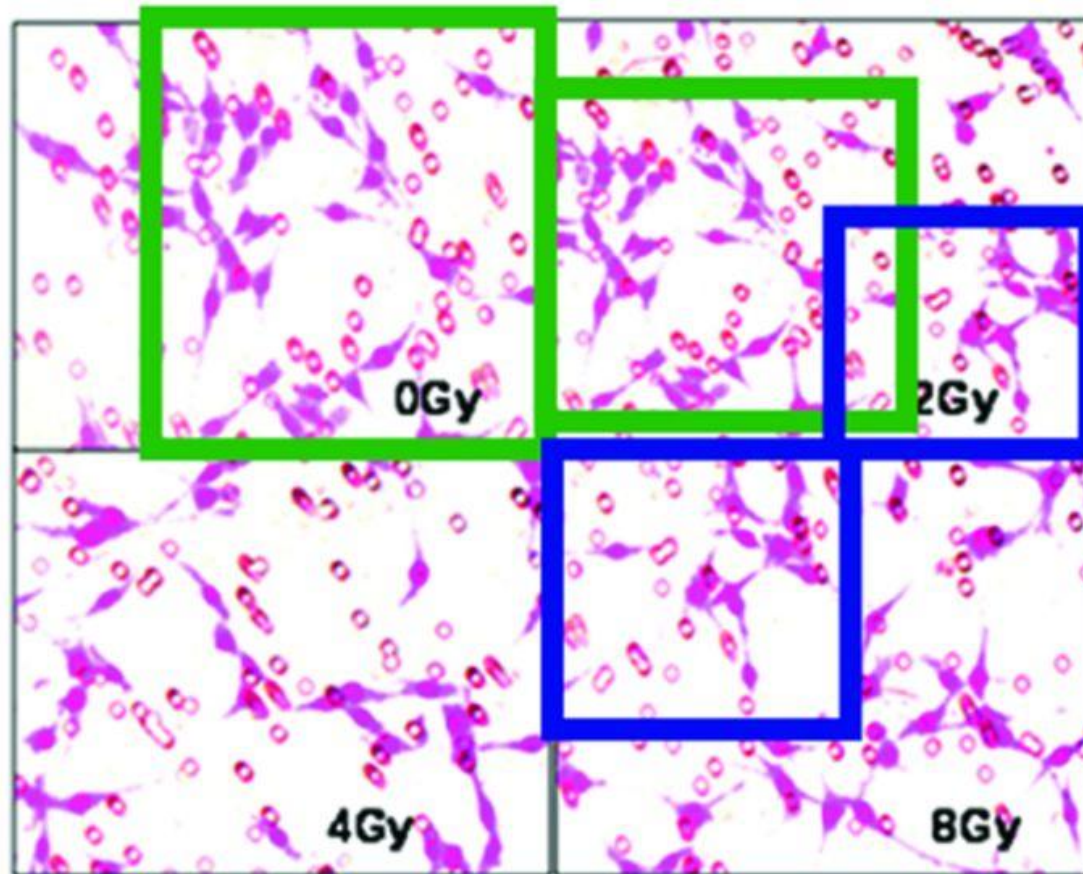
- Specific details must not be altered
- Adjustments must be to the whole image
- Ask the Editor for the original image



1. Plagiarism
2. Data fabrication
3. **Image manipulation**

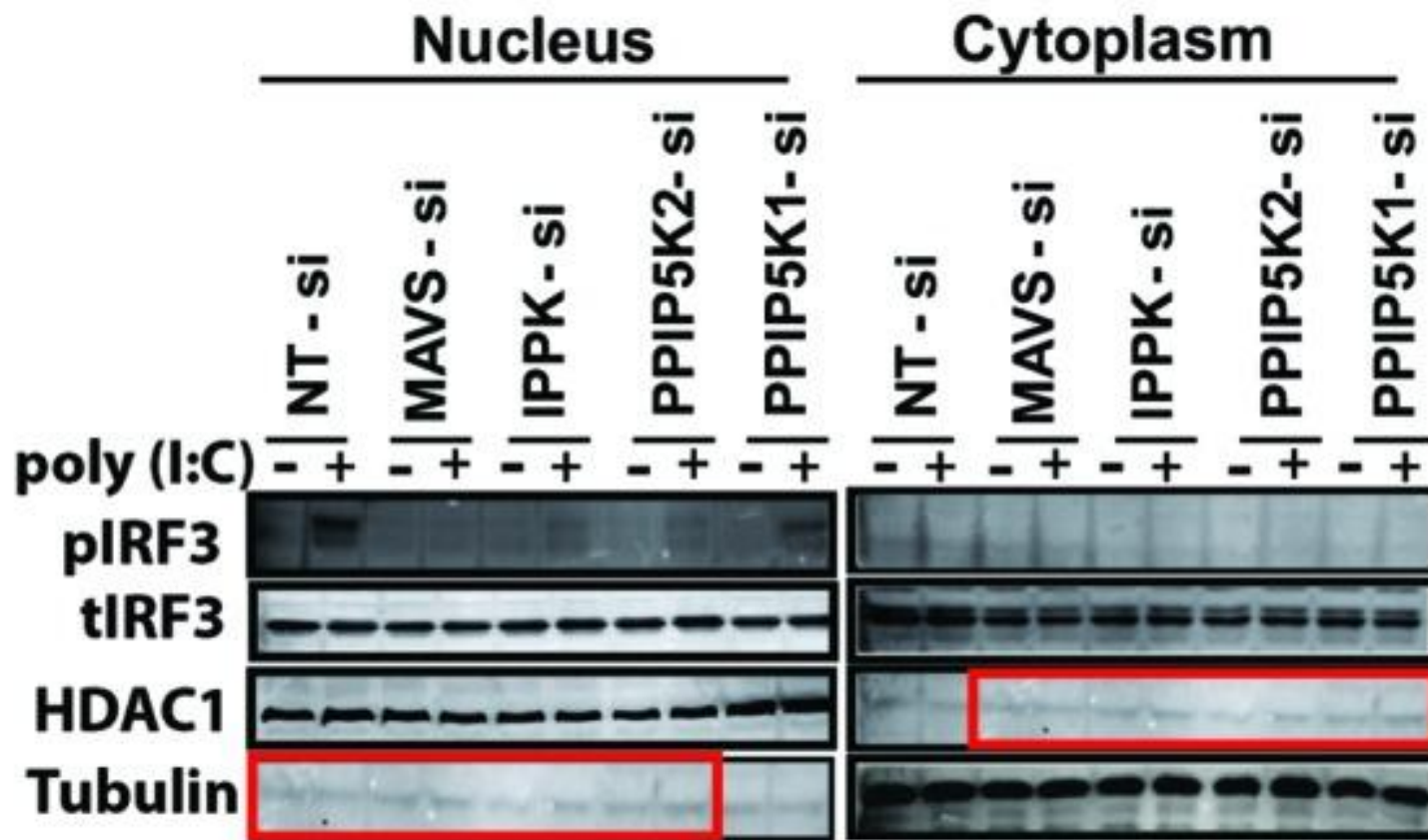
- Alterations are acceptable but must not:
 - **Obscure**
 - **Eliminate**
 - **Misrepresent**





Bik EM, Casadevall A, Fang FC. (2016)
 The prevalence of inappropriate image duplication in
 biomedical research publications.
 mBio 7(3):e00809-16. <http://mbio.asm.org/content/7/3/e00809-16>
 adapted from
 Liu Y et.al. (2014)
 Carbon Ion Radiation Inhibits Glioma and Endothelial Cell Migration Induced by Secreted VEGF
 PLoS ONE 9(6): e98448 <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0098448>





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Human genome-wide RNAi screen identifies an essential role for inositol pyrophosphates in type-I interferon response.

PLoS Pathogens 10(2): e1003981. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.ppat.1003981>

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What to do if you suspect misconduct

- Be sure there is a serious problem
- Do not include 'accusations' in a review
- Inform the journal Editor
- Visit the COPE and RetractionWatch websites





www.publicationethics.org

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Retraction Watch

www.retractionwatch.com





4. Summary

Summary

- To be aware of unconscious biases
- To declare conflicts of interest
- Maintain confidentiality
- Submit to agreed deadlines
- Types of ethical misconduct and how to spot them
- How to report misconduct
- How to stay informed

