

Authorship Guidelines

Naming authors on a scientific paper ensures that the appropriate individuals get credit, and are accountable, for the research. Deliberately misrepresenting a scientist's relationship to their work is considered to be a form of misconduct that undermines confidence in the reporting of the work itself.

While there is no universal definition of authorship, an "author" is generally considered to be an individual who has made significant intellectual contribution to the study.

Many journals provide guidelines for authorship in their instructions for authors, as do many professional organisations in their statements on ethics. Although the following guidelines on authorship and contributorship were formulated in the context of biomedicine, many of their underlying principles are applicable to all areas of science.

In 1985, the International Committee of Medical Editors (ICMJE) published criteria within the uniform requirements for Manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals that defined authorship. The current ICMJE statement on authorship reads:

Authorship credit should be based on

- 1) substantial contributions to the conception and design or acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data ;
- 2) drafting the or revising it critically for important intellectual content ; and
- 3) final approval of the version to be published. Authors should meet 1,2 and 3.

When a large, multicentre group has conducted the work, the group should identify the individuals who accept direct responsibility for the manuscript. These individuals should meet the criteria for authorship defined above and editors will ask these individuals to complete journal specific author and conflict of interest disclosure forms. When submitting a group author manuscript, the corresponding author should clearly indicate the preferred citation and should clearly identify all individual authors as well as the group name. Journals will generally list other

members of the group in acknowledgements. The National library of Medicine indexes the group name and the names of individuals the group has identified as being directly responsible for manuscript; it also lists the name of collaborates if they are listed in the Acknowledgments.

Acquisition of funding, collection of data, or general supervision of the research group, alone, does not constitute authorship.

All persons designated as authors should qualify for authorship, and all those who qualify should be listed.

Each author should have participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for appropriate portions of the content.

While the ICMJE criteria provide guidance about the types of contributions that characterize authors, it is ultimately the role of researchers themselves and not the editors to decide which individuals have contributed sufficiently to earn the designation "author". Individuals who have made less substantial contributions should be identified in the Acknowledgements. The "guest" author makes no discernable contributions to the study , so this person meets none of the criteria for authorship.

Honorary or gift authorship. Honorary or gift authorship has been defined as authorship based solely on a tenuous affiliation with a study. A saliently example would be "authorship" based on one's position as the head of the department in which the study took place.

Ghost authorship. Ghost authors participate in the research, data analysis, and/or writing of a manuscript but are not named or disclosed in the author byline or acknowledgments. Example of ghost authors indicate undisclosed contributors who are employees of pharmaceuticals or device companies, medical writers, marketing and public relation writers, and junior staff writing for elected or appointed officials. Any person who makes a substantial contribution to a manuscript should be listed in the author byline, if appropriate, or in the acknowledgements, along with the individual's institutional affiliations if relevant.

Anonymous Authorship. Because authorship should be transparent and requires public accountability, it is not appropriate to use pseudonyms or to publish scientific reports anonymously. In extremely rare cases when the author can make a credible claim that attaching his or her name to the document could cause serious hardship (eg threat to personal safety or loss of employment) a journal editor may decide publish anonymous content.

Other categories of authorship that may be acceptable in certain circumstances include group authorship and the inclusion of deceased or incapacitated authors.

Group authors. Group authors may be appropriate when a group of researchers has collaborated on a project, such a multicentre trial. Because it can be inaccurate and impossible to list all collaborators, authors need to think about how to communicate credit and responsibility for content. The editors of JAMA have outlined 2 group authorship models.

Authorship in which each person in the group meets authorship criteria, in which case the group is listed as the author, with the caveat that editors may require at least 1 coauthor to assume the role of content guarantor.

Authorship in which a select subgroup of the whole is listed in the byline on behalf of the whole.

Deceased or Incapacitated authors. For cases in which a coauthor dies or is incapacitated during the writing , submission , or peer review process, coauthors should obtain disclosure and copyright documentation from a familial or legal proxy.

Acknowledgements

In an acknowledgement section, authors may wish to include the name and contributions of those whose involvement in a study did not qualify them for authorship or, because of the journal policy on the number of authors in the author byline, cannot be included in the author byline. Authors should have each person listed in the acknowledgment sign a disclosure form or other statement acknowledging that they agree to have their to have their names appear.

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Originality. The authors should provide a statement attesting to the originality of the study they have submitted for consideration. Originality is crucial, because many journals have limited space and editors may give a low priority to studies that regardless of scientific accuracy and validity do not advance the scientific enterprise.

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