

On authorship in scholarly publications

Raúl H Sánchez-López
Editor de AUDITIO

The ethical statements and editorial policies of a scholarly journal provide tools to ensure the rigor and quality of the published works. One of the issues that is often discussed is the authorship of scientific articles.

In general, authors are those who have contributed intellectually and substantially to the preparation of a study. Institutions such as the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) recommend basing the definition of author on four simple criteria. These are, and I literally quote:

1. Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; AND
2. Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND
3. Final approval of the version to be published; AND
4. Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

If a contributor to the study meets the first criterion, he/she must always be offered the co-authorship of the manuscript, and the co-author must accept or reject this invitation. If accepted, the co-author must be actively involved in the preparation of the manuscript, since, if he/she fails to meet the other three criteria, he/she should not be considered the author of the manuscript according to ICMJE.

It is important that contributors agree prior to submission, or even prior the manuscript preparation, on the role that each contributor has in the study. There may be contributors who do not want to be part of the group of listed authors and there may also be people who have been deliberately omitted. In any case, it is important that the person responsible for the investigation, or the author in charge of the correspondence, clarifies these points before submission.

There are cases in which some people end up being part of the list of authors even if they do not meet any of the authorship criteria according to ICMJE, or only one. This is known as "gifted authorship". When a head of service or department is listed as an author for the mere fact of being responsible for the institution but has not actively and intellectually contributed to the de-

velopment of the article is considered "gift authorship". At other times these names are included to maximize the possibility of acceptance of the manuscript, even without the knowledge of the person involved ("guest authorship"). In all these cases AUDITIO is against these practices as indicated in our editorial policies.

Another case that can generate authorship disputes is the "ghost authorship", which happens when a contributor that meets the criteria of authorship has not been included as an author in a manuscript. The best way to deal with these cases is to reach an understanding, ideally in the form of a written contributorship agreement. This agreement would contain designate who the authors are and who are to appear in the acknowledgements section.

One way to avoid "gifted authorship" or "ghost authorship", is to use Contributors Roles Taxonomy (CRediT). The authors have to express in the manuscript what was the role of each author using 14 possible roles, from conceptualization to the review and editing of the final manuscript, through the analysis of data, visualization of results, etc. In this way, the scientific journal has the possibility to identify cases such as those mentioned above more easily.

In any case, disputes over authorship or contributions cannot be resolved by the *journal*, which must approach the institutions to which the authors belong if they do not reach an agreement. If there are allegations of authorship, the *journal* follows clear guidelines contained in "Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals". The editorial team of AUDITIO follows the recommendations of the Committee

On Publications Ethics (COPE) and makes use of the reviews of existing cases discussed in COPE forum.

References

International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (2019). Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals. File Available in [ENGLISH](#) and [SPANISH](#).

Council of Science Editors. Authorship and Authorship Responsibilities [Archive available in the Internet archive](#)

Committee on Publication ethics (2019). What to do if you suspect ghost, guest or gift authorship. <https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.2.18>

CRediT – Contributor Roles Taxonomy <https://casrai.org/credit/>

Sanchez-Lopez. R. , On authorship in academic publications, *AUDITIO* vol. 5(2) 37-38.

<https://doi.org/10.51445/sja.auditio.vol5.2021.0074>

<https://journal.auditio.com>

Published: 28.07.2021

© the Author. This article is published under a Creative Commons Attribution license 4.0.Ia which allows the use, redistribution and creation of derivative works without prior permission.

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/deed.es>

