



AUTHORSHIP DISPUTES: THREAT TO QUALITY IN RESEARCH

Medical Science

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ABSTRACT

Authorship contributes to up gradation of credentials among research scholars and academicians. Adherence to publication guidelines put forward by research committees help authors to practice quality in research. On the contrary, omission or violation of authorship guidelines results in disputes or ethical misconduct. It is the equal responsibility of authors and editorial members of journals to verify credibility of a manuscript from submission to publication.

KEYWORDS

author disputes, ethical misconduct, authorship guidelines, gift authorship and ghost authorship

INTRODUCTION

Research is at the top in matters of creation and up gradation of knowledge across the globe. It is a rigorous process involving formulation of problem, selection of methods, collection and analysis of data and finally, dissemination and utilization of findings. Each step requires the researcher to be vigilant in order to avoid any ethical misconduct which may hamper the study findings. Even if a research is carried out with at most care, there is a possibility of some disputes which may not be omitted. The purpose of this article is to highlight the importance of strict adherence to authorship guidelines in order to prevent unethical practices in current and future research.

Disputes In Authorship

Authorship disputes are queries or disagreements on substantial contribution of one or more members of a research work. These could result in ethical misconduct during the process of manuscript submission, peer review and publication. Therefore, credibility of a research is seriously questioned. Majority of authorship disputes happen due to guest or gift authors, ghost authors, and issues on guarantor and sponsorship. Ghost authorship happens when non-author contributions are not acknowledged and therefore attracts competing interest. Gift or guest authors are those researchers whose names are listed by-line in spite of least contributions and not meeting ICMJE (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors) criteria for authorship. Inclusion of names of a senior figure, an expert in the field, a friend or a colleague in manuscript as a favor and not based on authorship guidelines would be considered as gift authorship. [1]

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Authors may follow recommendations put forward by ICMJE, COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics) or UGC CARE (University Grants Commission Consortium for Academic Research and Ethics) guidelines in order to avoid any ethical issues in their previously published research work. According to latest version of ICMJE, a researcher is said to be an author if four criteria are met which include significant contribution to the conceptualization and design of research, collection, analysis and interpretation of data, drafting, revision, and approval of final version of manuscript before submission to journal and being accountable to solve queries on integrity of work. These criteria would help researchers to get credit for their work in every steps of study. [2][3]

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CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, each author listed in the manuscript must get the credit for participation in research as well as take the responsibility for accuracy from its inception to dissemination.

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