

## Authorship criteria and sequence

Misconducts reported in scientific publication are mostly around authorship. Although the criteria for authorship have been delineated a long time back by several authorities, it is still misused<sup>1</sup>. Probably this is because of the undue craze of personal and institutional credit, and promotion in the job, etc. However, people sometimes forget that authorship comes with responsibility and accountability. The International Committee for Biomedical Journals Editors (ICMJE) developed authorship criteria in 1979. Its latest update was released in May 2022<sup>2</sup>. ICMJE criteria are currently followed widely. According to ICMJE criteria, a substantive intellectual contribution to a paper is mandatory for becoming an author. These are:

1. Conception and design, or design of the research; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data; AND
2. Drafting the manuscript 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.

Anyone intended to be an author should meet all four criteria given above. Others who meet less than four criteria should be acknowledged in the acknowledgement section. The criteria do not intend to disqualify colleagues from authorship. All individuals who meet the first criterion should have the opportunity to participate in the review, drafting, and final approval of the manuscript. Being the unit's head or administrative supervisor or data collector does not necessarily qualify for authorship. Journal editors are concerned about inappropriate authorship. Therefore, many of them introduced a section on "author contribution" to bring transparency to authorship decisions. Some journals limit the number of authors for each category of the articles. Despite all these measures, the unethical authorship reportedly remained unabated.<sup>1</sup> The whisper of "cost", "ghost" and "gift" authors are still audible. It was found in 2008 in one-in-five journals<sup>3</sup>.

The sequence of the authors is another issue that colleagues should be cautious about. There are guidelines for authors<sup>4</sup> on this who become the first, last, and in-between authors<sup>5</sup>. The person with the most contributions should become the lead author. She or he usually becomes the corresponding author also.

However, its exception is also sometimes logical. The corresponding author usually takes primary responsibility for communication with the journal for submission, responding to the peer review, and dealing with the proof and press. The corresponding author is responsible for responding to the post-publication comments also. The senior author usually becomes the last author. However, the senior authors also sometimes write manuscripts and may decide to be the first or last authors.

The Bangabandhu Sheikh Medical University Journal will continue publishing an "author contributions" section for each article. This can prevent misconducts and post-publication concerns or questions by the authors themselves.

Md. Sharfuddin Ahmed

Vice Chancellor, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, Dhaka, Bangladesh  
ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8104-7585>

M Mostafa Zaman

Department of Epidemiology, Ekhlaspur Centre of Health, Chandpur, Bangladesh  
ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1736-1342>

1. Castillo M. Authorship and bylines. *Am J Neuroradiol* 2009; DOI: 10.3174/ajnr.A1636.
2. ICMJE. Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals Updated May 2022. Available at: <https://www.icmje.org/icmje-recommendations.pdf> [Accessed on 24 Dec 2022].
3. Joseph S Wislar, Annette Flanagan, Phil B Fontanarosa, Catherine D DeAngelis. Honorary and ghost authorship in high impact biomedical journals: a cross sectional survey. *BMJ* 2011; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.d6128>
4. Harvard Medical School, Authorship Guidelines. Available at: <https://hms.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/assets/Sites/Ombuds/files/AUTHORSHIP%20GUIDELINES.pdf> [Accessed on 24 Dec 2022]
5. How to Choose the Author Order in a Manuscript. Available at: <https://redwoodink.com/resources/how-to-choose-the-author-order-in-a-manuscript> [Accessed 24 Dec 2022].