

## Editorial

# And now? Who will be the authors?

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As research becomes an even more interdisciplinary activity, collaboration among scientists with different backgrounds is key to enhance the quality and outcomes of research projects. Investigators frequently collaborate to design studies, write proposals, collect and analyse data, write and proof-read reports and papers. Although these are the most common scenarios of interaction, there are also the need to use and share facilities, equipment and consumables, to look for technical assistance for experiments, results processing and advice for discussion. After finishing a project, one thing is always true: more people were involved than it could be forecasted by the time the idea was conceived. In a world where articles greatly contribute for competing for students, lab space, grants and jobs, authorship has major consequences and selecting the legit authors is a serious duty that needs to be based in solid ethics and technical parameters.

All the authors must have made primordial intellectual contributions to the study and being responsible for at least one of its components. In fact, according to the International Committee of Medical Journals Editors (ICMJE), the authors must satisfy all of the following criteria: 1) substantial contributions to conception and design, acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data; 2) drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content; and 3) final approval of the version to be published [1].

Although some of the details of ICMJE principles for authorship are arguable, in general it shed a light in the concept that all the author need to be acquainted with the research concept as a whole. This creates a condition where people that have contributed in many ways to the work may be the authorship role denied once they fail to understand the research motivation and outcomes that it produced.

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**Submitted:** 08 October 2013

**Accepted:** 10 October 2013

**Published:** 12 October 2013

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Likewise, adding further authors in order to inflate CV's is an unethical practice that can be observed in some papers where the work load and volume of data presented does not correlate to the extensive author roster. It is disappointing when authors fail to provide key information of their own work merely because they were responsible for running experiments or providing technical support without being actually involved in the research process. Unfortunately it is not rare to hear "I don't know" when asking to authors: what this paper is all about?

According to the ICMJE guidelines, those who contributed but did not fulfil the criteria must be cited in an acknowledgments section. Performing tasks that are indispensable part of the work, such as surgeries for *in vivo* studies, running experiments or data collection, does not translate into authorship if the all the criteria are not fulfilled. To avoid embarrassments, potential authors need to be included in the design of the work, analysis and discussion of the results, drafting and final approval of the article. This will legitimate their authorship and allow the contributors to be acquainted with other parts of the work that eventually were not under their responsibility and increase the bonds of researchers involved for further collaboration.

## REFERENCE

1. The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE). Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals: Ethical Considerations in the Conduct and Reporting of Research: Authorship and Contributorship. 2010.