

Editorial

The Toughest Part of Scientific Research

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I am Mo'awia Mukhtar Hassan, Professor of Medical Entomology. During 16 years of research work in the field of sand flies and leishmaniasis in Sudan, I have had so many hard times getting research funds, accessing harsh areas to conduct field surveys, spending the whole day and part of the night in laboratories with students, and drafting manuscripts of paper for publication. However, the hardest experience I have ever faced was a personal conflict with the Boss of my research group. I drafted a manuscript of paper (an extraction) from my Ph. D. thesis and I sent it to him as well as to the other co-authors who had participated in the work. He agreed to be on the authorship list for the publication. I was supposed to be the lead author and him a co-author. A few days later, he sent me an email conveying to me that the paper was so important, and therefore I could not be the lead author. I reminded him of my right to claim the first author position as I did almost the whole work; designing the study field work, carrying out laboratory investigation, administering data analysis and drafting the manuscript for publication. He sent me

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back an email requesting that I should suspend the matter for three weeks under the pretext that he was busy and needed time to think it over. While I had been waiting for his response, my email account was hacked, and I was denied access to it. Three months later, I could retrieve my e-mail with the help of one of my students, to find a message that had been on my mailbox for 35 days. It was sent by a journal inviting me to review a manuscript for publication. The manuscript was my own and it had already been published in that journal. The Boss manipulated authorship to his advantage, omitting my name and adding other co-authors who didn't have any contribution to that work. Since that time, I have been doing my best to remind myself and draw my students' attention to that in order to avoid conflict and have a successful research career, one must look for an honest and trusted group of researchers. Otherwise, a written binding agreement among collaborators should be negotiated and concluded.