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Institut National de Santé Publique, d'Épidémiologie Clinique et de Toxicologie  
National Institute of Public Health, Clinical Epidemiology, and Toxicology

# AUTHORSHIP GUIDELINES & POLICY

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# AUTHORSHIP GUIDELINES

## INTRODUCTION

The latest version of the recommendations of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE), also known as the Vancouver group, issued in 2001, states that:

“Authorship credit should be based only on:

(1) Substantial contributions to conception and design, or acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data; AND

(2) Drafting the article 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. Conditions (1), (2), (3) and (4) must all be met.

Acquisition of funding, the collection of data, or general supervision of the research group, by themselves, do not justify authorship.”

Later, there was consensus on the responsibility of the authors: the author is only responsible for his contribution to the project.

## HOW TO REDUCE THE INCIDENCE OF AUTHORSHIP PROBLEMS

(a) Encourage a culture of ethical authorship

(b) Start discussing authorship when you plan your research

(c) Decide authorship before you start each article

(d) Write minutes of meetings and make all participants sign then share with absents

(e) Abide by the group decisions and use the material (questionnaires and other assessment tools) as decided during meetings and written in the minutes. Keep everyone informed of any changes with a written note.

### **Special remarks:**

- Any breach of the above would lead to member's elimination from the project.

- No gift authorship is allowed whatsoever.

## KEY CONCEPTS IN AUTHORSHIP

**First author:** The first-named author is generally held to have made the greatest contribution to the research.

**Second author:** The second author is the person who contributed to the manuscript, but less than the first author. In case of equal contribution, the first and second authors could be first co-authors.

**Last author:** The last author is a senior team member who contributes expertise and guidance, coordinating and distributing tasks. This person a) should be involved in study design, data interpretation, and critical review of the publication; b) is responsible for results quality, content validity, and overall consistency of the manuscript; c) shares a moral responsibility for the manuscript with the co-authors. It is possible to have more than one last co-author.

**Corresponding author:** The corresponding author is the person whose contact details are printed on the article so that readers can request reprints or contact the research group. They are the recipient of the reviewers' comments, the proofs, etc. They are in charge of formatting the article and submitting revised versions until final acceptance.

**Remaining authors:** The remaining authors should be listed by decreasing order of contribution.

**Students:** students working on a project will be cited as authors if they fulfill the above conditions. If their contribution is limited to data collection, they will be entitled to acknowledgments without being cited as authors.

## REFERENCES

1. Albert T, Wager E. How to handle authorship disputes: a guide for new researchers (The COPE Report 2003). Retrieved from the Committee on Publication Ethics website: <http://publicationethics.org/files/2003pdf12.pdf>
2. The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICJME). Defining the role of authors and contributors. <http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html>
3. CSE's White Paper on Promoting Integrity in Scientific Journal Publications, 2012 Update. <http://www.councilscienceeditors.org/resource-library/editorial-policies/white-paper-on-publication-ethics/>
4. Tschardt T, Hochberg ME, Rand TA, Resh VH, Krauss J. Author sequence and credit for contributions in multi-authored publications. PLoS Biol. 2007 Jan;5(1):e18. doi: 10.1371/journal.pbio.0050018. PMID: 17227141; PMCID: PMC1769438. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17227141>

# AUTHORSHIP POLICY

Members of INSPECT-LB who are authors or co-authors of scientific publications are requested to adhere to the policy below. These guidelines have been designed to protect INSPECT-LB from any unethical authorship behaviors.

## RESEARCHER-RELATED CONSIDERATIONS

- All INSPECT-LB members should abide by ethical considerations and bylaws of INSPECT-LB and must sign the oath of researchers available online (<https://inspect-lb.org/ethical-considerations/>).
- All INSPECT-LB members are entitled to add INSPECT-LB affiliation to their publications (articles, books, book chapters, posters, and oral communications).
- INSPECT-LB members who co-author a scientific publication with scientists who are not INSPECT-LB members are entitled to include INSPECT-LB affiliation in the publication.
- INSPECT-LB members MUST NOT add the INSPECT-LB affiliation when they doubt the quality of a manuscript. They are also recommended to exclude their name from questionable/flawed works to protect their reputation and that of INSPECT-LB.
- INSPECT-LB members can collaborate with other researchers on any research theme; however, the first author(s) must be knowledgeable, preferably expert, through education or work in the subject matter to avoid scientific flaws.
- INSPECT-LB members are responsible scientifically and morally for the part(s) they write, which should conform to the following:
  - Conduct a complete literature review, and update it throughout the writing process;
  - Avoid any of the known forms of plagiarism in the narrative sections;
  - Describe a clear and detailed methodology according to the available checklists (<https://inspect-lb.org/methodological-checklists/>);
  - Clean the database before proceeding with the analysis;
  - Include a flawless results section, applying all the assumptions as appropriate, such as normality check, required by most journals, even with big samples.
- INSPECT-LB members should refrain from using irrelevant citations to support their writing, particularly when self-citing. Citing own work is sometimes necessary to avoid self-plagiarism or reflect the continuum of a long-term project. However, excessive self-citation aiming to raise the scores of authors by promoting their work lies under data manipulation

and undermines academic integrity. Excessive self-citation consists of using biased references (geographical, school-of-thought, agreement for mutual citation between a group of authors) that do not represent the state of knowledge in the field at the time of writing.

- When serving as editors or reviewers, INSPECT-LB members should refrain from practicing coercive citations to raise their score or that of the journal.
- INSPECT-LB members are advised not to enroll in projects if they believe they will find themselves working beyond the limits of their capacities or if they cannot dedicate the time required.
- Students can be listed as first authors, provided they are working on their thesis and agree to participate in the article submission and correction process until it is fully accepted. However, the following must be taken into consideration with respect to students' duties in the research work:
  - Even when the first author is a student, the last author (senior investigator) will be the person in charge of reviewing and correcting the paper and its consecutive versions before submitting it to other co-authors for editing and approval.
  - If a student is performing an analysis, the last author (senior investigator) is responsible for the quality of results.
  - INSPECT-LB members are allowed to include students in research projects that are not within the students' scope of specialty; however, students must not be held accountable for mistakes they have made during research work or paper writing. If they are assisting in writing, these students must not be listed as first authors, last authors, or corresponding authors. If the last author (senior investigator) believes that a student is entitled to be first author, then the student should be significantly involved in all steps of the research work and paper writing, including eventual corrections the reviewers require, under the supervision of the last author (senior investigator).

## **MANUSCRIPT-RELATED CONSIDERATIONS**

- The manuscript writing process is under the direction of the last author (senior investigator).
- The database, syntax, and output files should be neat and available upon request.
- When reviewer comments are received, it is the duty of the first author(s) to review the manuscript. They can request the help of the other authors (each for their part) whenever necessary.

- Answers to reviewers' comments must be written by the first author, reviewed by the analyst for statistical considerations, the critical editor, and the team leader for overall consistency. All other authors will also review the final version of the modified article.
- The writing, submission, and revisions must be conducted promptly but neatly; they must be carefully thought of, rigorously done, and conscientiously written to avoid unnecessary errors.

**Members who, for any reason, cannot abide by these regulations are requested not to add their INSPECT-LB affiliation to the publication.**