

CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE BUSY COORDINATOR

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Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) - Authorship and Publications

Dr Bright's graduate student was preparing to submit a publication. At the publication discussion, Dr. Bright's HOD suggested including her name as the first author for more credibility and broader circulation. Meanwhile the students were debating about how should the order of their name appear on the paper. Dr Bright is unsure of the appropriateness of the addition of the HOD as the first author and the right order of authorships as it has not been discussed prior.

Dr Bright approached the Dean for advice and the Dean shared some guidelines on Authorship & Publication from the Institution's Responsible of Conduct Research (RCR) Manual and relevant International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) Requirements as follows:

Who is an Author?

An author is considered to be someone who has:

- Made a significant contribution to the conception, design, execution or interpretation of the research study
- Drafted or substantively reviewed or revised the publication
- Approved the final version of the publication
- Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

What is Authorship credit?

This implies that one will receive credit and is responsible for a published or presented work based on:

- Substantial contributions to conception and design, or acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data;
- Drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content; and
- Final approval of the version to be published.

What is Good conduct in publication practice?

In publication and authorship, as in all other aspects of research, researchers are expected to follow the principles of good research conduct supported by the institutions they worked with. It is essential that the parties involved in research and publication discuss and agree early at the start of each project to avoid misunderstanding and authorship dispute before the commencement of the research on the following:

- Authorship
- Recognition of other contributions
- Acknowledgement of sponsors
- Declaration of any conflicts of interest

What should Dr. Bright do?

Suggested approach: Dr Bright should have an open discussion with the HOD on the publication plan, the authors to be named and their order of authorship. If the HOD did not meet all the criteria as an author based on institutional guidelines, she should not be listed as an author. She should be acknowledged for her contribution(s) (if any) for example, general supervision of administrative support should be specified. If necessary, Dr Bright may involve the Dean in the discussion.

Reference: NHG Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Manual, Chapter 8. Authorship and Publication

Additional Readings: [Publications/Authorship | ORI - The Office of Research Integrity \(hhs.gov\)](#), [International Committee of Medical Journal Editors](#), [Singapore Medical Journal](#)

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