

Topic for Discussion: Authorship

Cross-Cutting Themes: Mentor-mentee relationships, Collaboration, Scientific responsibility

Topic Overview – What’s at stake?

- Publications are one of key metrics of academic success and advancement.
- Authorship order signals contribution and holds weight when determining readiness for jobs, career development awards, grants, promotions.
- Being generous with authorship can demonstrate collaboration; advance team science
- Authorship also signals responsibility and accountability for content. Misrepresenting authorship can end up distorting the scientific literature on which our fields depend.

Getting the Discussion Started:

- What do you worry about most with authorship? Have there been issues you’ve already encountered or are concerned about?
- What are the norms within your research group regarding co-author responsibilities? How does authorship order get decided? How do you feel about those decisions?
- What other strategies do you have for demonstrating productivity and impact of your work, now that “impact factors” of journals are being called into question by the editors themselves?

Use the 4 R’s to think through a particular case or issue.

Process for Thinking through Difficult Ethical Dilemmas

Recognition: *What are the issues being raised? What is the underlying ethical concern? How does this issue impact me?*

Reasoning: *What values are at stake? Are there competing points of view? What are the potential benefits and harms of different actions? Are there any rules or guidelines that can help?*

Responsibility: *What are my responsibilities? Do others have responsibilities also?*

Response: *What should I do – and why?*

“Backpocket” Cases:

- You are first author of an abstract that reflects your independent ideas and methods development, with advising from one senior faculty member. What happens when a second senior faculty member in your research group says he must also be included as author (he had no intellectual, data, funding, or methods contribution to the paper)?
- You are asked to take over another partially drafted manuscript for a former graduate student who has left the lab. How do you discuss authorship with the PI?

Assigned Reading:

Zen Faulkes, Arbitration is needed to resolve scientific authorship disputes. PeerJ Preprints. OpenSource 12 June 2018. <https://peerj.com/preprints/26987.pdf>

Resources and Additional References

- International Committee of Journal Medical Editors (ICJME) authorship criteria: <http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html>
- NIH Office of the Ombudsman – Questions for Scientific Collaborators: <https://ccrod.cancer.gov/confluence/download/attachments/47284665/CollaborativeAgreementTemplate.pdf?version=2&modificationDate=1317863913370&api=v2>