Effective Medical Writing

Pointers to getting your article published

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Authorship and acknowledgements

ABSTRACT
All persons designated as authors of a scientific manuscript should qualify for authorship, and all those who qualify should be listed. Each author should have participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for appropriate portions of the content, and have made substantial intellectual contribution to the submitted manuscript. All contributors who do not meet the criteria for authorship should be listed in the acknowledgements section. Ghost authors are undesirable while professional medical writers are helpful to authors who are not native English speakers, have language difficulties, or lack training or expertise in medical writing.

Keywords: acknowledgements, authorship, ghost authors, medical writing, professional medical writers, scientific paper

INTRODUCTION
In biomedical publications, being designated as an author of a paper has important academic, social and potential financial implications. An author who is listed, is assumed to have made substantive intellectual contributions to a published study. The requirements for authorship are succinctly listed in the document “Uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals”, compiled by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE).

Yet, the correct listing of contributors to a manuscript appears to be a challenge to many. Issues such as who qualifies as an author, order of authorship, problems with “ghost authors”, and who should be acknowledged may be a source of dispute and ruined friendships. On occasion, the journal editorial office is inadvertently drawn in to mediate a dispute and this unpleasant task is one that most editors would strive to avoid.

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

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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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- Financial help, e.g. grant.
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- Minor contribution in a large multicentre project.
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Multiple Choice Questions (Code SMJ 200906A)

Question 1. The criteria for authorship, according to the International Committee for Medical Journal Editors include:
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