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'Author and Authorship' in Scientific Journals

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Science relies on new developments. Validation and accurate documentation of scientific research findings is important. Author has the responsibility of integrity of research, the findings and its publication. Clear guidelines for 'author and authorship' are necessary to distinguish among authors, coauthors and guarantor in order to be responsible for the integrity of the research publication. The publication in the peer reviewed scientific journal serves to communicate and validate such findings and so author needs to have substantive intellectual contributions for the work.

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In case of multi-authored work it is further complicated and difficult to judge 'how much' responsibility is needed to justify the listing and order

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Listing and order of authorship should be discussed well before the research begins and not at the time of writing, certainly not at the time of manuscript submission. All listed authors are required to sign authorship agreement letter to journal for their contribution. All authors are required to agree in writing for any change in the order and to add or remove author from the list. In case of conflict, the institution is responsible to investigate and provide information to the journal about the work and involvement. Instead of 1st, 2nd and so on, simply listing authors by their specific work may reduce this confusion of 'listing and order' and importantly avoid the misconduct of 'guest, gift, honorary or ghost' authorship.

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Appropriate authorship is important to maintain the value and integrity of science. There is no alternative to honest, transparent and fair authorship. We all need to work together to improve 'authorship' by adhering to the guidelines for authors, institutions, editors, reviewers and publishers.

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