Authorship dispute among the League of Extraordinary Gentlemen

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Abstract There was no consensus over authorship criteria until 1984, when the guidelines of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors were developed. These are now used as the standard for managing authorship criteria and analysing, who do not meet the accepted authorship criteria and cannot be listed in the article bylines. There was no consensus over authorship criteria until 1984, when the notorious ICMJE guidelines were developed. Typically, an authorship criteria means that powerful people, such as heads of departments, to exclude powerless contributors and to list their names as honorary authors, without paying attention to the accepted ethical codes. It may be an issue in the case of many researchers would gather together to play their own scientific role. Of course, while a molecular biologist cannot judge the clinical expertise and competence of a surgeon (and vice versa), each plays a part perfectly. Similarly to what happened when the League of Extraordinary Gentlemen mentioned above, these scientists meet the ICMJE authorship criteria. However, they can create a scientific masterpiece. No proposed criteria can totally prevent misconduct. Even honest authors can be confused over the precise role they play in preparing a manuscript. In a prospective study on 919 authors of 201 papers submitted to a general medical journal led by the first author to complete unjustifiable conflicts of interest for all authors. Co-authors were then asked individually to describe their part of work. It turned out that there was a poor agreement, with more than two thirds of the lead authors presenting statements different from their co-authors. We believe that the proposed authorship scheme, though imperfect, can resolve many of the problems with authorship. This scheme may lead to the revision of career promotion criteria and analysing, which may, in turn, cause a new set of ethical problems. Nonetheless, the time for the old authorship criteria is up, and it is now time for the authorship criteria to change.

Keywords Authorship; contributorship; editorial policies.

Once upon a time, the League of Extraordinary Gentlemen conducted a study to assess ways to remove the threat of Fantom. The idea of this work first came to Mr. C. Captain Nemo designed the study and asked Rodney Skinner (the invisible man) to implement the blinding and masking for the study. In one of the stages of the study population by Tom Sawyer and Allan Quatermaine, all blood samples were taken and analysed by Mina Harker (a vampire and well-known invisible man) to implement the blinding and masking for the study of intraocular pressure. The first author had died. Three months before he called me about the acceptance. That is when a native English professional writer assists a scientist with substandard English writing skills and is not acknowledged by editors and ethical committees as the standard for managing ethical problems. Nonetheless, the time for the old authorship criteria is up, and it is now time for the authorship criteria to change.

The authors’ order in article bylines is a driver of career promotion worldwide. The first and last places in the bylines are key positions. Quarrels over the prestigious first place are common even amongst close friends. The order is usually based on the amount of work done by co-authors: presumably the first author does much of the work. Though it is unlikely that two or more authors do exactly the same amount of work, the distinction of being the first author is often difficult to judge. Dorian Gray (the immortal), after a life of research, wrote the manuscript ready for submission to the Journal of Voodoo Arts. However, they quarrelled about the names of byline authors. None of the named people who contributed to this study fulfilled the authorship criteria set by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE). So, this manuscript is ready for submission but nobody fulfils the authorship criteria. Although this situation is not common in real life, it may be an issue in the case of many researchers would gather together to play their own scientific role. Of course, while a molecular biologist cannot judge the clinical expertise and competence of a surgeon (and vice versa), each plays a part perfectly. Similarly to what happened when the League of Extraordinary Gentlemen mentioned above, these scientists meet the ICMJE authorship criteria. However, they can create a scientific masterpiece. No proposed criteria can totally prevent misconduct. Even honest authors can be confused over the precise role they play in preparing a manuscript. In a prospective study on 919 authors of 201 papers submitted to a general medical journal led by the first author to complete unjustifiable conflicts of interest for all authors. Co-authors were then asked individually to describe their part of work. It turned out that there was a poor agreement, with more than two thirds of the lead authors presenting statements different from their co-authors. We believe that the proposed authorship scheme, though imperfect, can resolve many of the problems with authorship. This scheme may lead to the revision of career promotion criteria and analysing, which may, in turn, cause a new set of ethical problems. Nonetheless, the time for the old authorship criteria is up, and it is now time for the authorship criteria to change.

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