

ETHICAL ASPECTS OF AUTHORSHIP & PUBLICATION

Joe Henry Steinbach

Department of Anesthesiology
Division of Biomedical Sciences



Washington University in St. Louis

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

**Program for the Ethical and Responsible Conduct of
Science and Scholarship
(PERCSS)**

Task Force III

James Ballard

Jonathan Green

Sandy Hale

Erik Herzog

Ruth Lewis

Cathy Sarli

Samantha Schlesinger

Joe Henry Steinbach

Fred Sweet

WHY PUBLISH?

Unpublished research is not part of the scientific enterprise - unpublished company drug studies are not part of the knowledge base to advance science (they are proprietary)

Publication is a way to gain recognition of a scientist's role in the advancement of our understanding

Authorship is essential for professional success and advancement

RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

**PUBLICATION IS THE POINT AT WHICH MANY
SEVERE ETHICAL LAPSES BECOME APPARENT**

**FABRICATION
FALSIFICATION
PLAGIARISM**

RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

Falsification. "manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results **such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record.**"

Fabrication. "making up data or results and **recording or reporting them.**"

Plagiarism. "the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit."

RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

When you are managing a research project, it is critical that you are very familiar with the data obtained in your group, and fully understand the definition of research misconduct.

Effective Research Management

requires that we manage less extreme situations

**Three principles to follow in preparing work
for publication are:**

Honesty
Accuracy
Completeness

An honest, accurate and full report should be made of the experimental conditions, data analysis and all other aspects of the research

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Your scientific reputation is largely set by the
quality of your publications

AUTHORSHIP

One of the most common sources of friction or even conflict in lab personnel interactions is over the question of authorship.

Such a conflict can result in significant loss in productive research time, and, in the most intensive cases, can consume a large amount of time and effort on the part of the lab head and administrators.

AUTHORSHIP

Washington University has an official Policy for Authorship
on Scientific and Scholarly Publications
<http://www.wustl.edu/policies/authorship.html>.

Policy for Authorship on Scientific and Scholarly Publications

Authorship should be restricted to those individuals who have met each of three criteria:

- (a) made a significant contribution to the scholarly effort,
- (b) participated in drafting the article or reviewing and/or revising it for content, and
- (c) approved the final version of the manuscript.

Policy for Authorship on Scientific and Scholarly Publications

Co-authors assume full responsibility for all work submitted under their names

Honorary or courtesy authorships are inconsistent with the principles of this Policy

Knowing, intentional or reckless violations of these principles are considered research misconduct as defined by the Washington University Research Integrity Policy and will be referred to the appropriate Committee on Research Integrity (CRI).

Building on the framework of the Policy, how can conflict be avoided or managed?

First: The role(s) and contribution(s) of the participants should be discussed during the course of the research, so that there is a mutual and clear understanding before a manuscript is contemplated.

Building on the framework of the Policy, how can conflict be avoided or managed?

Second: The criteria for inclusion as an author, and the criteria for determining author order, should be clearly expressed and understood by all in the group before a manuscript is contemplated.

Building on the framework of the Policy, how can conflict be avoided or managed?

Third: The decisions on authorship should be explicitly reconsidered in light of changes in the data included in the manuscript.

What to do when, despite your best efforts, a conflict arises in your group

If the process of deciding authorship has been defined and clear, it should be possible to discuss the issues one more time and resolve them.

What to do when, despite your best efforts, a conflict arises in your group

If a conflict remains (or if the initial process has not been defined), there are 2 actions to consider (not exclusive ones):

- consult with a respected colleague. If the reaction is that you messed up, take the advice and gracefully modify your decisions.
- request mediation by a more senior individual in your division or Department.

What about collaborative projects?

The most critical action here is to discuss authorship at the outset of the collaboration, before individuals become invested in the studies and before the outcome is known.

What about collaborative projects?

The criteria used by your institution and, in particular, your laboratory should be explicitly discussed.

Expectations for authorship on both sides of the collaboration should be explicitly discussed.

What about collaborative projects?

These discussions can be awkward, but the possible pain, suffering and loss of future collaborations make them worthwhile.

What about collaborative projects?

If a conflict arises, resolution can be difficult. It may be necessary to meet in person, in the presence of some moderator. In the worst cases, this can escalate to the level of involving Deans.

If accusations of misconduct arise, this can indeed be a very complicated issue to resolve.

IN SUM

For publications:

Honesty

Accuracy

Completeness

IN SUM

For authorship:

Definition

Transparency

Preparation

Thank you for your attention