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Although editors may not always be able to individually monitor author or contributor listings for every submission, they may sometimes have suspicions that an author list is incomplete (eg, involves ghost authorship) or that undeserving authors have been added (eg, includes guest or gift authorship). This guidance document is designed to alert editors to potential warning signs of inappropriate authorship and prevent future authorship problems at the manuscript submission stage.

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This may be legitimate, but may also mean deserving authors have been omitted; reviewing the original protocol may help determine the role of employees

Name on author list known to be <u>from u</u>nrelated research area

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acknowledgements

Individual thanked without a specific contribution

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For example, a simple case report with a dozen authors or a randomised trial with a single author

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# **BEST PRACTICE TO PREVENT AUTHORSHIP PROBLEMS**



for transparency around who contributed to the submitted work and in what capacity

POLICIES





Check for and follow up unusual patterns of behaviour that may suggest authorship problems

# PROCESSES

and infographics – How to recognise potential authorship problems – English. https://doi.org/ 10.24318/cope. 2019.2.22 ©2023 Committee on Publication Ethics (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) [Z\* Publicationethics.org] Version 2: April 2023.

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COPE Council. COPE Flowcharts



# **TYPES OF AUTHORSHIP PROBLEMS**

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References

- Gøtzsche PC, Hróbjartsson A, Johansen HK, et al. Ghost authorship in industry-initiated randomised trials. PLoS Med 2007;4:e19. <u>https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.0040019</u> [2]
- 2. ICMJE. Recommendations for the conduct, reporting, editing, and publication of scholarly work in medical journals. May 2022. https://b.link/icmje-7 🖓

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(https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.2.18) suggests actions for these situations. However, other types of authorship misconduct include naming fictitious characters or non-humans (eg, software) as authors; publishing coauthors' work with or without their names but without their knowledge, permission, or agreement; and not disclosing authorship to conceal major conflicts of interest. Possible associated issues are forged authorship forms, plagiarism, systematic manipulation of the publishing process, and use of paper mills. The following are some preventive measures that can be taken.

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### **Relevant COPE Flowcharts:**

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Request for removal of author before publication. https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.2.9 Plagiarism in a submitted manuscript.

https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.2.1 Systematic manipulation of the publication process. https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.2.23

### **Further reading**

COPE Discussion document on authorship. https://doi.org/10.24318/cope.2019.3.3

COPE Discussion document on best practice in theses publishing. https://doi.org/10.24318/LQU1h9US

eLearning module on authorship (members only). https://cope.onl/elearn-authorship

Siu-wai Leung. Promoting awareness of good authorship practice. https://cope.onl/authorship-awareness

Seminar 2021: Ethical authorship versus fraudulent authorship. https://cope.onl/ethical-fraudulent

COPE position statement on authorship and AI tools https://cope.onl/ai-authorship

DeTora LM et al. Good Publication Practice (GPP) Guidelines for Company-Sponsored Biomedical Research: 2022 Update. Annals of Internal Medicine. 2022;175(9):1298-1304. https://www.acpjournals.org/doi/10.7326/M22-1460 C ORCID https://b.link/orcid-1 C CBediT

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