

Role of Authors in the Medical Manuscripts

Medical journal authorship refers to identifying and acknowledging the individuals making substantial contributions to a research study and publishing it as a manuscript. Typically, authorship is granted to those who have made significant contributions, such as designing the study, collecting and analysing the data, or writing the manuscript. Several guidelines have been established to determine authorship, such as the World Association of Medical Editors (WAME)¹ and the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE).² These guidelines help to ensure that authorship is attributed fairly and transparently.

The order of authors in medical journals is generally based on their contribution level to the study or manuscript. According to the ICMJE and the WAME, the first author typically has made the most significant intellectual contributions to the study, such as designing the study, collecting and analysing the data, and writing the manuscript. The last author is typically the senior author or the person who has supervised the study. The senior author, listed as the last manuscript author, is often a more experienced researcher with a higher academic rank or position. A senior author is typically the person who has supervised the study and has made significant contributions to the research, such as providing guidance, oversight, and mentorship to other authors. The senior author takes overall responsibility for the study, ensuring that the study was conducted ethically and that the data were collected and analysed correctly. It is also essential that the senior author is aware of any potential conflicts of interest and ensures that they are reported in the manuscript.

It is also expected that the corresponding author is usually the first or last author and takes responsibility for communication with the journal and ensuring that all authors have approved the final version of the manuscript before submission and have agreed to its submission for consideration of publication.

The other authors are listed between the first and last authors either in alphabetical order or in the order of their contribution.

It is important to note that some journals have different policies on authorship and the order of authors, so it is best to check the journal's specific guidelines before submitting.

It has been commented that medical researchers might have substandard knowledge of authors' roles, especially about the senior authors' listing on the medical manuscript. It is also noted that journals in Pakistan (both indexed and non-indexed) do not have a uniform policy on the authorship criteria. Moreover, the role of the senior author is not recognised by the regulatory body. Hence, when Pakistani researchers go overseas, sometimes the least contributing author listed last, gets unexpected credit for being the senior author.

There remains a need to standardise the local policies according to the WAME and ICMJE guidelines for all medical journals, and researchers should be aware of it.

COMPETING INTEREST:

The author is on the editorial board of the JCPSP as an international advisory board member.

AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION:

Substantially contributed to the concept, design, and drafting of the manuscript.

REFERENCES

1. Authorship. <http://wame.org/authorship> (assessed on 27th Jan 2024).
2. Defining the role of authors and contributors. <http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/> (assessed on 27th Jan 2024).

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