

Guidelines for Authorship Attribution and Citation in the Dissemination of Scholarly Work

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Confusion may arise when determining how to properly credit authorship of scholarly work when the work was conducted by multiple individuals. Unfortunately, there is no consensus among disciplines, journals, publication formats, and sponsors of live dissemination venues (e.g. conferences) on how authors are to be identified, listed, or cited. Without standards for author attribution and citation, teams conducting scholarly work must determine and agree to principles for appropriately acknowledging each member's contributions at the project onset. The following discussion and recommendations may be helpful to the nursing profession by providing consistent guidelines related to publication and dissemination of scholarly work.

Authorship

Definitions of who is and who is not an author vary among sources (Borenstein & Shamoo, 2015; Hren et al., 2014; Kennedy, Barnsteiner, & Daly, 2014; Teixeira da Silva & Dobranszki, 2016; Wager, 2009). Standards developed by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) are commonly used by journals, including many nursing journals. According to ICMJE (2017), individuals must meet four criteria to be considered authors of scholarly work submitted for publication:

- Make substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; *and*
- Draft the work or revise it critically for important intellectual content; *and*
- Give final approval of the version to be published; *and*
- Agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

Furthermore, the ICMJE states that any author should be able to identify the contributions made by other authors and have confidence in the rigor and integrity of those contributions. Individuals who do not meet all four of these criteria should not be listed as authors, and instead, be acknowledged as contributors to the work.

Recommendations

Authors should identify only those individuals who meet all ICMJE criteria as authors for scholarly work that is submitted for dissemination. Authors should defer to the preferences and requirements of specific journals and conferences for guidance on how to format authors' names and credentials and how to provide acknowledgements of contributors.

Ordering of Authors' Names

Determining the order of authors (e.g. first author, second author, last author, etc.) also varies by discipline and tradition (Wager, 2009). Often the first author is the individual who provided the largest contribution to the work, but this is not always the case, particularly when contributions among authors are of relatively equal size. In this case, authors may choose to list authors' names alphabetically or in

rank order based on seniority. Authors with substantive contributions who are actively seeking academic promotion or tenure are sometimes allowed first authorship. Typically, students are listed as first authors if the work constitutes the student's thesis or dissertation (Lindo, LePage, & Beason, 2016). The listing order of authors should be discussed and agreed upon prior to developing the manuscript, poster, or presentation (Clement, 2014).

The corresponding author is the individual who is accountable for communications between the journal or conference sponsor and the author team. The corresponding author may or may not be the same individual as the first author.

Recommendations

First authorship should be granted to the individual providing the largest contribution relative to the ICMJE criteria described earlier. The ordering of authors should be discussed among the authors and consensus reached prior to drafting publications or presentations.

Institutional Affiliation of Authors

How to identify the institutional affiliation for each author is sometimes unclear. Typically, each author lists her or his employing institution as the affiliated institution if the scholarly work is completed as a component of the author's employment (Anstey, 2014). For most academics, the institutional affiliation will be their university or college, though some journals may require the additional listing of the specific department or unit within the university or college employing the author. Increasingly, however, authors have multiple affiliations, perhaps including a clinical agency or private company. If the scholarly work is relevant to multiple institutions in terms of author employment or study sponsorship or funding, the author may identify the institution where the bulk of the scholarly work was completed as the primary affiliation. Authors should consult specific journal or conference guidelines on listing affiliations.

Recommendations

Academics should identify their employing college or university as their institutional affiliation if the scholarly work was conducted as partial fulfillment of one's employment expectations. Likewise, students should identify their college or university of enrollment if the work constitutes an academic requirement. If multiple affiliations are present, the author should consult with the different institutions for guidance. When academics identify another institution as the primary affiliation for current scholarly work, academics should consider the work as a professional service activity and not as personal scholarship for purposes of employee performance evaluations and / or rank and promotion, since primary affiliation implies the institution for which an academic identifies primary responsibility and accountability for the specific scholarly work.

Presentations of Scholarly Work

Little information is available in the literature on how to address authorship issues for poster and oral presentations of scholarly work. The dearth of information suggests that authorship of presentations should be handled in a similar fashion to published works. Differences in how authors are cited in presentations are most likely due to differences in custom, preference, and discipline.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are congruent with most university standards and with citation requirements of the American Psychological Association (APA, 2010).

- *List all authors on posters and presentations:* The main purpose of a scholarly presentation or poster is to disseminate information about the scholarly work, not the presentation skills or individual perspectives of the presenter. As such all authors should be listed on the poster or the presentation title slide in the same order as listing for a publication. The presenter will introduce him or herself to the audience at the beginning of the presentation. An exception to this approach would be if the presentation contained only a unique component or stand-alone study from a larger study for which the presenter is the sole contributor. In this case, the other authors should be acknowledged as authors of the larger study.
- *Citing posters and presentations:* Posters and presentations should be cited following APA guidelines (2010). It is not necessary to identify which of the authors actually presented the material. If a presenter, however, discusses further information or perspectives about the scholarly work outside the presentation, then such information should be cited as personal communication. (See example below.)
- *Listing Posters and Presentations in Curricula Vitae:* Posters and presentations of one's scholarly work are noteworthy forms of scholarship dissemination. When listing posters and presentations of scholarly work in one's CV, one should list all authors (similar to a publication) and list all occurrences of the presentation of the scholarly work, whether one was the actual presenter or not. If one did not serve as the presenter for a specific presentation occurrence, the actual presenter(s) should be noted along with the citation. Typically this is done by using bold font for the name(s) of the presenter in the citation.

Example: Rice, R., **Hunter, J.**, Spies, M., & **Cooley, T.** (2017, July). *Undergraduate student nurses' perceptions of the usage of art therapy in mental health*. Presented at Sigma Theta Tau 28th International Nursing Research Congress in Dublin, Ireland.

In the above example, the bolding would indicate that Hunter and Cooley actually presented at the conference.

Conclusion

Determination of authorship roles and conventions for citation are complex and potentially controversial processes, due in large part to varying standards across disciplines and dissemination venues. Consideration of these recommendations provides consistent methods to appropriately acknowledge the contributions of co-authors, thus reducing conflicts among authors and confusion among the consumers of scholarly work.

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