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AUTHORSHIP: Recommended Best Practices for Determining Authorship

post docs

Familiarize yourself with the *HMS Authorship Guidelines* (found at www.hms.harvard.edu/ombuds) and encourage the same of your colleagues and collaborators. Ask your PI or lab manager to provide authorship guidelines to all newcomers to the lab and a description of the lab's usual ways of deciding authorship and authorship order.

1. Talk early about authorship and authorship order for each project's manuscript(s)
 - Know the specific criteria to be used for your project
 - Know the decision making process—who provides what input, how decisions are made, who has final say
 - Know how your group will address disagreements if they arise
2. When gathering input about contributions, everyone should put in writing and share:
 - Her/his contributions
 - What s/he thinks every other author contributed (this can reveal misunderstandings and provide the opportunity for clarification)
3. If authorship determination seems straightforward, get the designations set forth ***but understand that this order could change if contributions change significantly***
4. Contribute to a culture of transparency and collaboration. Ask questions. Revisit the issue of specific authorship periodically in case contributions or assumptions about contributions have changed.
5. If a disagreement arises, make every effort to resolve the dispute locally
 - Among the authors
 - By involving the PI (if the PI isn't already involved)
 - By involving the HMS|HSDM|HSPH Ombuds OfficeBe professional at all times

HMS Authorship Guidelines: Key Definitions and Responsibilities

- An author should have made a *substantial, direct, intellectual* contribution
- Funding and provision of technical services, patients, materials alone are not sufficient
- Everyone making a substantial intellectual contribution to the work should be author
- Everyone making other substantial contributions should be acknowledged
- All authors should review manuscript drafts and approve the final version
- One author should take primary responsibility for the whole work, including compiling a concise written description of everyone's contributions that all authors have approved and filing it with the sponsoring institution
- Working within the publisher's space guidelines, authors should describe each author's contributions and how order was assigned to help readers interpret roles correctly

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