Research and Authorship Responsibilities

By

Professor Datuk Dr. L.M. Looi
Distinguished Professor, University of Malaya
Editor-in-Chief, Malaysian Journal of Pathology
Chair, Medical Ethics Committee, UMMC
The research-publication enterprise is ultimately based on trust

- Society trusts that scientific research and publications are truthful and without bias.
- A breach of that trust has far-reaching negative impact on the scientific community.
- Inculcation of responsible and ethical conduct among young researchers and authors should be a key concern for academic mentors and editors.
Historically scientific/ biomedical researchers have enjoyed immunity from accountability

- High public regard for Science & Medicine

Blemished image of biomedical research

- Biological research on vulnerable subjects in WW II
- WMA Declaration of Helsinki (1964)

Accountability is now a necessary facet of developed Society
Accountability in Research by Peer/Public Review

- Clinical Practice – Code of Professional Conduct
- Biomedical Research
  - Ethics Committee/IRB Approval
  - Animal Care Committee
- Journal requirements
  - Editorial policies
Declaration of Helsinki

- Most widely accepted guideline on medical research involving human subjects
- Developed by World Medical Association in June 1964
  - 1964 (Helsinki): Preventive measures in reaction to WW II biomedical research atrocities
  - 1975 (Tokyo): Statement of ethical principles to guide medical doctors engaged in clinical research
  - Revisions: Adaptations to expanded scope of biomedical research. 1983 (Venice); 1989 (Hong Kong); 1996 (Somerset West, South Africa); 2000 (Edinburgh); 2008 (Seoul, Korea).
ICH Harmonised Tripartite Guidelines for Good Clinical Practice

- Based on Declaration of Helsinki
  - Respect for the dignity of the person
    - Right to information
    - Informed consent
    - Right to refuse or withdraw from study
  - Research should not over-ride the health, well-being and care of subjects
    - Benefits should outweigh risks
  - Principle of justice
    - Benefits & burdens of research be distributed fairly among subjects
RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

- Fabrication
  - Making up of data or results

- Falsification
  - Manipulating research materials, equipment or processes
  - Changing or omitting data or results (or images) so that research findings are not true

- Plagiarism
Advantage of authorship

- Academic advancement
- Social prestige
- Financial advantage
What are the common problems related to authorship?

Authorship criteria

Authorship responsibilities
AUTHORSHIP
COMMON UNETHICAL PRACTICES

- Unjustified authorship
- Political authors
- Exclusion of valid co-worker
Criteria for authorship

- Made substantial contributions to the intellectual content
  - Concept and design
  - Acquisition of data
  - Analysis and interpretation of data
Criteria for authorship

- Certify that manuscript represents valid work
  - Vouch for validity of data
  - Take public responsibility for the work
Criteria for authorship

- Approve submitted manuscript
  - Involved in drafting or revising the manuscript
Multiple authors

- Authors should be those who accept direct responsibility for the manuscript
- Editors may ask for disclosure of roles
- Order of authorship should be joint decision of co-authors
- Increasingly, authorship of multi-centre trials attributed to group
  - All members of group listed as authors should fulfill criteria for authorship
  - Others listed in acknowledgements
  - Group name identified and indexed
Ethical Responsibilities of Authors

- Submitted work based on scientifically sound, ethically conducted research
  - ICH-GCP guidelines
  - Declaration of Helsinki
  - Ethics committee (IRB) approval
  - Animal care committee approval

- Manuscript accurately reflect design and conduct of study

- Privacy and confidentiality of research subjects

- Rightful acknowledgements made

- Declare all potential conflicts of interest
OVERLAPPING PUBLICATIONS

- **Duplicate submission**
  - Simultaneous submission of manuscript to two or more journals

- **Redundant publication**
  - Submission that overlaps substantially with already published work
  - Salami publication

- Does not apply to oral & poster presentations at conferences
- Does not apply to secondary publication in different language with permission of Editors