

Addiction's policy on fair authorship and acknowledgment practices

Authorship credit should be given to those who have made a significant contribution to the research project or the resulting article. Those who have not contributed should not be authors; those who have contributed should not be left out. Towards that end, Addiction endorses the use of CRediT (Contributor Roles Taxonomy).

BACKGROUND

Many research projects will result in multi-author publications, requiring important decisions on who should and should not be included as an author and where in the author list they should appear. These decisions can be particularly daunting for early career researchers (ECR) and students, who should receive fair authorship credit. Authorship decisions that rely on 'rules of thumb' or traditions may not reflect expected standards of practice and may not best serve the field as we seek to promote gender and geographic balance in scientific publishing. Some universities and research organizations provide useful guidance on fair authorship and acknowledgment practices, as does *Publishing Addiction Science* [1], a comprehensive guide for the addictions field. Although these guides may differ in minor detail, taken together the consensus is to provide an ethical code of practice. *Addiction* is committed to providing an environment of fair scientific practice and therefore has prepared this policy statement, which sets out the journal's own expectations.

TRADITIONAL CRITERIA FOR AUTHORSHIP, AUTHOR POSITION AND STATEMENT OF ROLES

In line with guidelines in major medical journals, *Addiction's* policy is that authorship credit is given to those who have (i) made a significant scientific contribution to the project (e.g. data gathering, study development, interpretation of the results and data analysis) or (ii) contributed significantly to the writing of the article, by helping to draft it or revise it. Those who have not contributed in these ways should not be listed as authors, and those who have contributed should not be left out. Nobody should be included without their consent. All authors take responsibility for the article.

The journal cannot resolve disputes around authorship. However, it is recommended that what merits inclusion as an author should be discussed at the very start of any

research project in order to avoid problems later on. The earlier these discussions occur, the better. As an example, when students assist with data collection, a role that itself may not merit authorship, it should be clear before they start work whether or not their contribution will be likely to result in authorship. Furthermore, the amount of time devoted to a research project does not, in itself, determine authorship inclusion or position in the author list, a fact that should be stressed to collaborators whose expertise involves large or small commitments of time to the project. Whatever is decided about authorship must be made clear to all concerned at the outset.

Because of the importance often attributed to first and last authors within medicine and behavioural sciences, disagreements frequently arise regarding the order of authors. Among the behavioural sciences, current practice holds that the first author is the person who has taken the lead on the writing, and on funded projects this person is often the Research Fellow or Trial Manager. The last author is often the research team leader, such as a Principal Investigator or PhD supervisor. When the publication derives from a student's own work (e.g. graduate project, thesis), the student should be first author unless, with agreement of the student, someone else has had to take a lead role in bringing the paper to completion. In that event, the student should normally be second author [2,3].

Thus, *Addiction's* policy is that students and junior staff should be lead authors on publications based on findings from projects they have developed or led from conception. Only in exceptional circumstances should this recommendation not be followed.

Similarly, *Addiction* expects that all those who have made a significant contribution at all phases, some of which may precede and not include the writing, should be included as authors; this may include those who may leave their current roles, or go on care leave (e.g. maternity/paternity) or be away due to sickness. This includes students, junior staff and senior staff.

This policy recognizes that there may be exceptions. In those cases, the reasons should be specified in the letter accompanying the submission.

A BETTER WAY: CREDIT

In response to the limitations of the current system of authoring policies and practices, a taxonomy of contributions has been established. CRediT (Contributor Roles

Taxonomy: <https://www.casrai.org/credit.html>) has been adopted by a number of medical and scientific journals (e.g. *British Medical Journal*), including *Addiction*.

CRedit identifies 14 different roles that reflect the range of contributions researchers make to publications and their underlying research. Acknowledgement of the role, rather than the position in the authorship ordering, aligns with the aims of fair practice and transparency by acknowledging people whose work and expertise have been essential to the project but who might not contribute to the writing-up (e.g. data curators and analysts, software developers and programmers). It also captures data on level of individual contribution, e.g. lead, equal share or supporting.

Applying the CRedit taxonomy in machine-readable form, as *Addiction* is doing, will also enable statistics to be gathered on the distribution of key roles within certain fields and between different types of studies. These data can be used to determine skills required when planning studies and forming research teams. In time, researchers should find that the use of CRedit allows their specific skills to be recognized when it comes to promotion or job applications.

Addiction and the Society for the Study of Addiction has developed an online Paper Authoring Tool (PAT: <https://www.addictionpat.org/>) that incorporates CRedit as a set of check-boxes for each author to tick. This allows PAT to provide a description of each author's role in the paper.

Addiction also offers ways to acknowledge those who have contributed to the work but do not meet the criteria for authorship; this can be beneficial for students, and so erring on the side of inclusion is advised.

Declaration of interests

S.C. provides expert consultancy to providers of life insurance on smoking cessation and the use of reduced risk

products. She is Assistant Editor for *Addiction*. J.O'R. is Editorial Manager for *Addiction*. R.W. has undertaken research and consultancy for companies that develop and manufacture smoking cessation medications. He is Editor-in-Chief of *Addiction*. J.N. has received, through her employer King's College London, consultancy fees and research grants from pharmaceutical companies: Camurus AB and Mundipharma International Ltd. She is Commissioning Editor and Senior Qualitative Editor of *Addiction*.

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