



P – 176: Identification of authorship issues by using an authorship declaration form

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Background

Cochrane publications may be susceptible to unethical authorships such as gift authors. Surveys of first authors of Cochrane reviews confirmed this in 2000 and 2019 where the rate of gift authors was 39% and 41%, respectively. To overcome this issue, Cochrane Colorectal Group initiated an authorship declaration form that must be signed by each author during the editorial process.

Objectives

We aimed to assess the impact of applying an authorship declaration form in a Cochrane Review Group.

Methods

The authorship declaration form was initiated in 2020. It consists of three parts (Fig. 1): 1) submission information; 2) documentation for roles according to the four authorship criteria of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE); and 3) identification information and signed approval by individual authors including the date. The form was sent to the contact author, who collected the forms filled out by each co-author. The forms were assessed prior to evaluation of the submission. We evaluated all protocols and reviews received after the initiation and present the results of applying an authorship declaration form early in the submission process.

Results

We received 250 authorship declaration forms from 40 submissions (53% protocols and 48% reviews). For most submissions (70%), there were no issues after assessing authorship declaration forms. However, there were authorship issues for 30% of the submission. These included that not all authors fulfilled all ICMJE authorship criteria, authors that wished to be removed as they had not contributed, and authors wanting to be added after submission. The latter was handled according to guidelines from Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). All issues were raised to the authors and resolved by the author group when informing them of the ICMJE criteria for authorship and COPE guidelines.

Conclusions

Most Cochrane authors provided signed evidence that they fulfilled all four ICMJE authorship criteria. However, issues were raised in 30% of submissions, and all issues were subsequently resolved. The awareness of authorship criteria is sharpened by using an authorship declaration form. This could help decrease the rate of unethical authorships in Cochrane publications and thus contribute to ethical and robust evidence production.

Contact

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Figure 1. The authorship declaration form of Cochrane Colorectal Group that must be filled out individually by each author.

Authorship declaration

Manuscript title: [Click here to insert text.](#)

Manuscript number: [Click here to insert text.](#)

Manuscript type: Protocol Review

Corresponding author: [Click here to insert text.](#)

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I hereby declare that I have contributed to the manuscript according to the following criteria.

Please note that authorship is based on fulfilling all four criteria.

1. Conception, acquisition, analysis, interpretation, *please mark one or more of the following*
 - a. Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work.....
 - b. The acquisition of data for the work (review only).....
 - c. Analysis of data for the work (review only).....
 - d. Interpretation of data for the work (review only).....
2. Drafting and revising, *please mark one or more of the following*
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3. Final approval of the version to be published.....
4. Agreement 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.

I hereby declare that the above contributions are correctly reflected in the section "Contributions of authors" in the submitted manuscript.

Name	Date	Signature
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Each author needs to fill out a copy of this form and sign it. The corresponding authors shall return all forms to Cochrane Colorectal Group by email to cochranecolorectal@gmail.com