Authorship guidelines for scientific publications

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As the Global Burden of Disease collaborative network and the impact of our research grows, our work is being featured in more peer-reviewed journals than ever before. Many of these journals ask us to provide detailed information on the qualifications of the authors of each publication. We have also heard from collaborators that you would like more detailed indication of your contributions to papers. In order to support this effort, faculty and staff at IHME have developed the following criteria and guidelines for authorship and the order of authors’ names in GBD capstone papers. The starting point for these criteria were the authorship guidelines of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors. We built on those to fit the needs of GBD and the collaborative network. These criteria will create greater clarity on the requirements for authorship while extending authorship status to as broad a qualified group as possible.

We will implement these guidelines starting with the GBD 2016 capstone papers. If you have any questions, please contact Kate Muller, Assistant Director for Scientific Communications, at winnekat@uw.edu.

Authorship criteria for scientific publications

In order to qualify for authorship, potential authors must meet the following criteria:

1. Contributing substantially to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work.
2. Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content.
3. Giving final approval of the version of the manuscript to be submitted.
4. Agreeing 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.

Should any journal have specific criteria for authorship beyond those listed above, we will additionally adhere to those criteria.

Categories of authors’ contributions

Starting with the GBD 2016 capstone papers, we will indicate authors’ contributions (by category) toward individual papers in the supplementary appendix for each paper. This method will more accurately recognize the many varied contributions from authors. Authors can select several or all of the following categories for contribution:

- Providing data or critical feedback on data sources
- Developing methods or computational machinery
- Applying analytical methods to produce estimates
- Providing critical feedback on methods or results
- Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content
• Extracting, cleaning, or cataloging data; designing or coding figures and tables
• Managing the overall research enterprise

When claiming authorship for a paper, authors will self-identify to which of the above categories they belong. To make sure authors are not inadvertently missed, IHME will cross-check authors in some categories (for example, by checking authors against logged comments for papers or the list of collaborators who provided data). Where appropriate, we will also use the paper’s “Contributors” section to recognize individual authors’ contributions.

Order of names in author lists
Starting with the GBD 2016 capstone papers, one or two individuals will be called out as first authors (to be listed first in the list of author names) and as senior authors (to be listed last). These designations will be selected by the paper’s senior author. All other authors will be listed alphabetically, with their individual contributions delineated by category in the appendix as described above.

Non-author contributions
In general, contributors who were actively involved in the project for the paper in question will be considered for authorship. All contributors who are not listed as authors will be considered for acknowledgment. Depending on the limitations of the journal, an attempt will be made to acknowledge all non-author contributors. If a methodological advance or other important contribution by a contributor already has been published and that contributor is no longer actively involved in the project, that work is more likely to be cited in the paper instead of giving authorship or acknowledgment.