Editor's Note

Recently, our journal received a complaint about unethical conduct of research in one of our articles. We have published "Editorial expression of concern" on the website regarding the complaint.[1] The investigation was formally organized by Faculty of Medicine Ramathibodi Hospital, Mahidol University. The results of investigation reveal quite a few problems, one of which is honorary authorship. The author informed that the reason was to comply to culture of distributing authorship credit among colleagues.

"Honorary authorship" is also named as "gifted authorship", "unmerited authorship", or "guest authorship". This is the practice of yielding authorship credit to those with unsubstantial contribution to the work. This practice of honorary authorship may be defined as a type of research misconduct by some organization.[2] Wislar et al[3] have reported frequency of honorary authorship ranging from 12% - 23% in 6 major medical journals. Underlying reasons may be varying from coercion from senior faculty or intention to boost credibility of the paper. Culture was suspected to be a cause that cannot be explained by linguistic reasons.[4]

There are concordant criteria of authorship based on contribution by International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE)[5] and Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)[6]. The criteria are as followed:

1) Substantial contributions 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
3) Final approval of the version to be published
4) Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work

According to this incidence, RMJ will require all author to disclose their contributions to the submitted manuscript. This procedure is to follow guideline of publishing and educate authors about the proper practice.

Asst. Prof. Dr. Chusak Okascharoen
Editor in Chief

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