

Stanford University School of Medicine
Responsible Conduct of Research
Session 1: Authorship, Publication, and Inventorship
Makeup Cases

Please choose one case and write a 3-5 page paper that answers the questions that accompany the case. E-mail the paper to tobinsl@stanford.edu with your name in the subject line. Your paper is due at noon on the last day of class for the quarter.

Case 1:

<http://onlineethics.org/reseth/appe/vol6/friendship.html>

Friendship vs. Authorship

Dr. Jane McDonald is a psychology professor at a university in Texas. Her good friend and colleague, Dr. David Woodford, is a psychology professor at a university in Alabama. Both Jane and David are members of a professional psychology association that has requested the assistance of its members in conducting a large national survey. Although Jane and David are not teaching at the same university, they went to graduate school together and thought it would be fun to collaborate on this study. After some discussion and planning, they informed the professional association that they would be happy to conduct the study. During the planning stage, they agreed that since Jane would be doing more of the logistics of the study, she would be listed as first author and David would be listed as second when it came time to publish.

Jane approached one of her graduate students, Mark Dunn, and asked him if he would be interested in taking responsibility for the logistical aspects of the study, such as mailing the surveys and data entry. Mark was informed that he would not be responsible for the new data analysis or final report since David would be doing these tasks. However, Jane did not discuss the issue of authorship with Mark. Mark, new in the psychology program, was flattered to be asked and agreed to participate.

Eight months later Mark completed his portion of the study and sent the data to David for analysis. Several weeks later Jane approached Mark and told him that David had not completed the data analysis and it needed to be done. Furthermore, she needed to have the data in a final report format so that she could present it at a conference in two weeks. Mark spent most of the next two weeks conducting the data analysis and writing the final report. Jane expressed her gratitude to Mark for his commitment to the project and asked if he would be interested in collaborating on the final paper for publication. Mark agreed.

Two months after Jane and Mark had this discussion, Jane handed Mark a final draft of a manuscript that was to be submitted the next week for publication. Never in the previous two months had Jane asked Mark to help with writing the paper. Furthermore, although David had not contributed to writing the paper, he was listed as second author and Mark was listed as third. Mark approached Jane and expressed his confusion as to why he was not asked to participate, and why David was listed as second author. Jane stated that she was too busy to collaborate and that it saved her time to write the paper herself. Furthermore, she and David had an agreement about authorship from the beginning, and nothing could be done to change the arrangement.

Discussion Questions

1. Since Mark was not included in the planning stages of the study, should he be included as an author?

2. Should participation in some parts of a study have greater weight in determining authorship than participation in other parts?
3. Although Jane and David reached an agreement at the outset of the study, should David be included as an author?
4. Did Jane let her friendship with David get in the way of doing what was right with regard to including Mark as second author?
5. How could Jane have handled this situation in a way that was fair to her?
6. How could Jane have handled this situation in a way that was fair to Mark?
7. Did Jane deceive Mark when she failed to collaborate with him in writing the paper?
8. What can Mark do to ensure that he receives proper credit for his work?

Case 2:

<http://onlineethics.org/reseth/appe/vol6/authorship.html>

Authorship

Dr. Messelman Killinger is a cell biologist at Big University who has a policy about authorship that he discusses with each new member who joins his lab. He states that only those who have made a significant intellectual contribution to an experiment will be included on any paper. He also states that he is the final authority about what is defined as a significant intellectual contribution, should a disagreement arise. He further states that he will be included as last author on any paper that is the result of research done in his lab.

David Tonkyn is a post-doc in Killinger's lab and is working to characterize a novel organelle that has been identified in the protozoan parasite *Entamoeba histolytica*. Based on biochemical studies of the purified organelle, David suspects that it may be an as yet unidentified mitochondrion in this organism.

Haruko Tomonaga, a technician in Killinger's lab, has worked very closely with David on his biochemical studies related to this organelle. She has done most of the trouble shooting and optimization for the experimentation. She also developed a novel method of isolating organelles from the organism.

Benson Zophar is a first year graduate student who is currently doing a six-week rotation through Killinger's lab. Benson participates in the final experiment of this project, which shows that a protein normally targeted to mitochondria in other eukaryotes is targeted to this novel organelle in *Entamoeba*. These data suggest that the novel organelle may indeed be a mitochondrion.

Killinger encourages David to submit the data for publication as quickly as possible. David does the writing, gives the paper to Haruko for review, and then presents the data at the lab meeting the following week. Following the meeting, Killinger, David, Haruko and Benson discuss authorship assignments for the paper. David makes the point that since Haruko offered novel ideas to the project and helped in trouble-shooting and in the review of the paper, she should be included as second author. He further argues that although Benson assisted on the last experiment of the project, he did not contribute intellectually and therefore should not be listed as an author. David states that Benson should be included in the acknowledgements for his contributions to the project. Finally, David states that Killinger should be included as last author on the paper since the work was done in his lab and supported by funds from his grant. All present are in agreement with David's decision, and the paper is submitted.

Discussion Questions

1. Do you agree with the order of authorship that David proposed? Why or why not?
2. Is it ethical to include Haruko (the technician), but not to include Benson (the graduate student) on the list of authors for this paper?
3. Does it matter that Benson was just rotating through the lab and not (as yet) a regular member?
4. What constitutes a significant intellectual contribution? Who should decide?