

What to do if you suspect ghost, guest or gift authorship

(see also flowcharts on Changes in authorship, as such requests may indicate the presence of a ghost or gift author)

*** Note**
Initial action will depend on journal's normal method of collecting author/contributor info

**** Note**
Including clear guidance/criteria for authorship in journal instructions makes it easier to handle such issues

***** Note**
Marusic et al. have shown that the method of collecting such data (e.g. free text or check boxes) can influence the response.

Letting authors describe their own contributions probably results in the most truthful and informative answers.

Reference
Marusic A, Bates T, Anic A et al. *How the structure of contribution disclosure statement affects validity of authorship: a randomised study in a general medical journal.* *Curr Med Res Opin* 2006;22:1035-44

Developed for COPE by Liz Wager of Sideview (www.lizwager.com) © 2013 Committee on Publication Ethics First published 2006

A non-exclusive licence to reproduce these flowcharts may be applied for by writing to: cope_administrator@publicationethics.org

