



From the Editor . . .

Authorship: rights and responsibilities



**Gill Nelson,
Editor-in-Chief**

As we fast approach the end of the year, and look forward to the holidays, I would like to give you something to think about when planning your articles and research papers for 2018. I have addressed several issues relating to queries about authorship

this year and I realise that, for many, the issue is not clear cut. There are several reputable websites that provide guidelines for authorship. In alignment with the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE), *Occupational Health Southern Africa* adheres to the basic principles regarding authorship of scientific papers.

Any person who has contributed significantly to the intellectual content of the research has the right to be an author. The four ICMJE criteria for authorship are as follows:¹

- “substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; and
- drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content; and
- final approval of the version to be published; and
- 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.”

Under no circumstances should anyone be excluded from drafting, reviewing or approving the manuscript (second and third criteria), with the intent to withhold authorship. The last of the four criteria is often overlooked, and is a major responsibility of authors. Those who do not feel confident to ‘defend’ the work that has been published, have the right to decline authorship (and should do so) or

withdraw their names as authors, at any stage prior to publication. It is advisable to agree on authorship before the paper is written, to prevent disagreements later in the process. Those who do not meet the four criteria should be acknowledged (with their permission).

The corresponding author is the one who takes administrative responsibility during the publication process. It is important that the corresponding author is available to address queries during the submission period, and beyond.

In this issue, we present two reviews. The first, written by Van Niekerk et al., addresses the benefits of using standing desks in schools, as a means of reducing prolonged sedentariness and risk for non-communicable diseases. In the second review, Harmse et al. describe the microbial exposures that occur during the processing of poultry, and suggest prevention and control measures. Additionally, Jansen et al. discuss healthcare risk waste management in South Africa. The MMPA, SASOHN and SAIOH have reported on their annual congresses. We also have an account from one of our readers on his experiences at the World Congress on Safety and Health at Work, and a report on a course on statistical methods for analysing occupational hygiene data. I hope that you will find these articles interesting, and that you will be inspired to send us your contributions in the New Year.

On behalf of the Editorial Board, I wish you all the best over the festive season. Enjoy the time with your loved ones; rest after all the hard work of 2017; and come back invigorated and motivated to continue (or start) your research.

REFERENCES

1. ICMJE. Defining the role of authors and contributors. Available from: <http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html> (accessed 23 Nov 2017).