



# 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

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