

Publication policy for the SCANDINAVIAN SURGICAL OUTCOMES RESEARCH GROUP (SSORG)

The publication policy of the SCANDINAVIAN SURGICAL OUTCOMES RESEARCH GROUP (SSORG), concerns the *determination and documentation of authorship/contributorship*.

This document represents the shared vision of the SSORG members and is thus accepted by all members of the group.

The SSORG-policy regarding determination and documentation of authorship/contributorship is based on the authorship criteria and recommendations formulated by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE):

"Authorship credit should be based on

1) substantial contributions to conception and design, acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data;

2) drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content; and

3) final approval of the version to be published.

Authors should meet conditions 1, 2, and 3

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Acquisition of funding, collection of data, or general supervision of the research group alone does not constitute authorship.

All persons designated as authors should qualify for authorship, and all those who qualify should be listed.

Each author should have participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for appropriate portions of the content".¹

As the ICMJE criteria and –recommendations leave room for interpretation, certain specifications regarding the actual determination and documentation of authorship/contributorship are presented below:

¹ http://www.icmje.org/ethical_1author.html

Before inclusion of the first patient a contract should be made regarding authorship

- A contract should be made stating clearly who will be first author, who will be last author, and who will be included in the writing group (see below). One investigator from each participating department should sign the contract.
- Members of the writing group are all authors on the final paper.
- Additional persons can also be authors on the paper, and it will be stated in the contract what it will take to become an author if not in the writing group. Typically this would be inclusion of a certain number of patients in the study. Such an author not in the writing group will be offered the chance to make critical revision of the manuscript draft as well as final approval. Thus, all 3 authorship criteria will then be fulfilled.
- Authorship order should also be stated in the contract. This can be determined by the relative importance of the contributions, by alphabetical order, country order, or other rules.

The writing group

- Manuscript preparation takes place in a writing group, typically consisting of 3-5 members.
- All members of a writing group should meet ICMJE authorship criteria.
- Each writing group appoints a corresponding author, a first author and a last author.
- Each writing group appoints an author in charge of manuscript drafting (the first author on the paper).

During manuscript preparation

- 2-3 weeks before the first manuscript draft is ready, the author in charge of manuscript drafting should notify all members of the writing group (i.e. the co-authors).
- When distributing the manuscript draft to the co-authors, it should be pointed out that each co-author has 2 weeks to revise the manuscript draft.
- If a co-author is not able to do the revision within time, the author in charge of manuscript drafting should be notified as soon as possible.
- If a co-author does not report back, he/she should no longer be considered an author (cf. ICMJE authorship criteria 2).

- After 2 weeks, the author in charge of manuscript drafting prepares a new draft based on all co-authors' revisions
- When distributing a new manuscript draft to the co-authors, it should be pointed out that each co-author has 1 week to revise the new manuscript draft.
- If a co-author is not able to do the revision within time, the corresponding author should be notified as soon as possible.
- If an investigator did not contribute to study conception/design and/or is not member of the writing group, he/she should still be included as an author if ICMJE authorship criteria 1 is fulfilled (acquisition of data /analysis and interpretation of data).
- Regarding acquisition of data, potential authors have to include a minimum of xx patients (will be stated in the contract, see above).
- It is the responsibility of the writing group, and ultimately the last author, to make sure that all "new" authors subsequently will be able to fulfil ICMJE authorship criteria 2 and 3.

Completing manuscript preparation: byline draw-up

- When the final manuscript is ready to be submitted, all authors should meet (can be virtually, by email) in order to align expectations regarding final byline draw-up.
- The SSORG-designation should always be part of the byline (see below)
- Authorship order and thus byline draw-up can be determined on the basis of the relative importance of each author's contributions, roles and responsibilities. It can also be a simple alphabetical order, based on number of included patients, or by other rules.
- It is the responsibility of the last author to make sure that all authors listed in the byline meet all ICMJE authorship criteria and that no one who meets the criteria are left out.
- If consensus regarding author order cannot be reached, the last author has the final word.
- Investigators not fulfilling all ICMJE authorship criteria should be mentioned in the "Acknowledgements" section.
- Contributors not fulfilling all ICMJE authorship criteria should be mentioned in the acknowledgement section.
- The byline should include all authors as well as the SSORG-designation:
Author R, Author S and Author T on behalf of the SSORG.

- If the journal does not allow the number of authors, even though they all fulfill the ICMJE authorship criteria, then the byline should be like this:

Author R, Author S, Author T and the SSORG.

In the acknowledgement section all authors should be stated, e.g. like this:

The SSORG for this study consisted of Author A, Author B, Author C, etc, who all fulfill the ICMJE criteria for authorship.