



Palliative Care Research Cooperative Group (PCRC)

Authorship Protocol

VERSION 1.1

VERSIONS	APPROVED DATE
1.0	3 OCT 2011
1.1	6 MAR 2012



Introduction

In accordance with the recommendations of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editorship (ICMJE),¹ the Palliative Care Research Cooperative (PCRC) Group shall have a written policy on the criteria for authorship related to PCRC research output. Minimum criteria are in accord with the Vancouver Protocol.²

1. Authorship is substantial participation, where all of the following conditions are met:
 - a. Conception and design, or analysis and interpretation of data, or both,^{1,2,3}
 - b. Drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content,^{1,2,3} and
 - c. Final approval of the version of the manuscript to be published.^{2,3}
2. Participation solely in the acquisition of funding, general supervision of the research group, or the collection of data does not justify authorship.^{1,3}
3. One co-author will be nominated as Executive Author for the whole research output, and will take responsibility for record-keeping regarding the research output.^{1,3-7}
4. A signed authorship statement must be generated for each manuscript that acknowledges each author's contribution in writing and includes the order of authors.^{1,3-8}
5. For large, multicenter group studies, the group should identify authors who accept direct responsibility for the manuscript. When submitting a "group" manuscript, the corresponding author should provide the preferred citation and list of authors as well as the group name.²

The PCRC Publications Committee is responsible for overseeing the PCRC Publications process and ensuring that the requirements of the PCRC Authorship Protocol are met; the PCRC Steering Committee will oversee the Authorship Protocol and conduct Publications Committee responsibilities until the Publications Committee is fully constituted and functioning. As outlined in the PCRC Publications Committee's Terms of Reference, there is an explicit expectation of efficiency in the PCRC Publication development and review process, to ensure that our responsibilities to timely distribution of research findings are met. The PCRC Publications Committee will be supported in this process by the PCRC Administrative Core.

Proposing Research Output

The PCRC must manage a large volume of research output. Dissemination of research findings is an ethical responsibility of the cooperative group.

A component of PCRC research output is defined as the intellectual product of a defined methodology, data collection and analysis subset of an overall PCRC study (e.g. main results for a clinical trial; sub-study of the trial to determine predictors of response). Occasionally, similar research output may be considered by several authorship teams who approach the content with a different intellectual focus (e.g. systematic review of literature to support study rationale; analysis of large databases to support study rationale).

Within the context of any PCRC project, the Study Investigator team and the PCRC Publications Committee will seek to define as much of the research output as possible in advance. Examples include the main results manuscript(s), background manuscript(s), and presentation of results at major conferences. The PCRC Publications Committee will monitor that these research products are planned and outlined early in study initiation, in accordance with their Terms of Reference.

However, it is not possible to anticipate all elements of the research output within the context of any specific project. There may be additional analyses and investigations, corollary projects, and others. Any PCRC investigator or staff member can propose specific PCRC research output for consideration for publication or conference presentation. The proposal should include the scope of the work product, suggested Executive Author, potential venue for publication or presentation, and timeline. The work is proposed to the PCRC Publications Committee, via the PCRC Administrative Core. The Publications Committee will respond, via the PCRC Administrative Core, within a timeline consistent with the Committee's Terms of Reference. The PCRC Administrative Core will maintain documentation of all communications.

Authorship Teams

The PCRC seeks to support authorship within a team framework. As such, the PCRC will encourage authors to work in authorship teams focused on each type of PCRC research output. The Executive Author will head each team. The Executive Author serves as the Guarantor as advocated by editors of *JAMA*, *BMJ* and *Lancet*. Members of the authorship team function as Contributors.⁴⁻⁷ Different authorship teams may be comprised of exactly the same members, although membership can shift and teams reframed to accommodate the type of research output, interest of the team members, contributions, etc. Also, people who are not PCRC Principal or Co-Investigators but who contribute significantly to a component of research output and meet the criteria for authorship may be members of the respective authorship team (e.g. PCRC project staff, or colleagues without specific PCRC membership or affiliation).

Responsibilities of the Executive Author (Guarantor) include:

- Ensuring that the authorship team maintains the highest standards of research integrity;⁴⁻⁷
- Defining the types of presentation of the research output (e.g. conference presentations, manuscripts);
- Negotiating with the authorship team regarding authorship inclusion and order within all presentations and manuscripts, including appropriate representation of the participating statistician(s);
- Ensuring all potentially eligible authors have been invited to participate through an open call;
- Negotiating with the authorship team as to who makes each conference presentation;
- Working with statistical team to plan tables and figures, preferably before the dataset is locked;

- Oversight of the preparation of manuscripts, abstracts and presentations including maintaining accountability for content;⁴⁻⁷
- Oversight of the record-keeping regarding the research output including circulating drafts, integrating changes, and production of the final version;^{1,3}
- Preparation and record-keeping regarding the authorship statement;⁸ and,
- Timeline development and adherence.

The PCRC will strive to include all researchers and project team members who have substantial contribution into research output in an authorship team and who meet the criteria for authorship as laid out in this Authorship Protocol. We seek to avoid disseminating any research findings that do not appropriately indicate participants or acknowledge their work. Similarly, the PCRC expects that all contributing authors will work to ensure the integrity of the project and avoid any aspects of fraud.¹⁻⁸

In order to determine who should be invited to participate in the development of an academic product, especially if a project has moved to the analysis and interpretation phase without clarification of the authorship team, the Executive Author should do the following:

- Propose a specific set of criteria, skills or expertise that would add value to the authorship team (e.g. particular basic science, clinical science, analytic, or clinical expertise, where clinical expertise is defined as a minimum proportion [e.g., 2.5%] of participants enrolled to provide insight of clinical experience within the trial);
- Submit the list to the PCRC Publications Committee for endorsement; and,
- Put forth an open call to PCRC investigators against this list of criteria.

Contributors who participated in the project but do not meet criteria for authorship need to be credited in the Acknowledgements section of a PCRC manuscript. Indications for acknowledgements include meeting only one or two of the three authorship contribution categories listed in items 1 a,b,c of the Introduction section of this Authorship Protocol, reading drafts of the manuscript, data collection only, etc.⁴

The PCRC Administrative Core will maintain a running Research Output Agenda and Summary Report that reflects planned and completed PCRC output. In the proposed output section, columns will include Executive Authors for each topic, Authorship Team Members for each topic, a proposed forum, and a proposed timeline. The date in the timeline will reflect the goal date for submission of the manuscript to the first journal of interest. The completed PCRC output section will include notation of forum, type of presentation (oral, poster, manuscript), and complete citation. In addition, the PCRC Administrative Core will maintain a list of pertinent Journal Impact Factors. Appendices 1-4 present sample forms that help to operationalize this process; an example summary report is in Appendix 5.

The Executive Author, in collaboration with the PCRC Administrative Core, is responsible for ensuring that a signed authorship statement is generated for a manuscript before it is submitted to the first journal. This statement acknowledges each author's contribution in writing, includes the order of authors, and documents that conflict of interest management processes are in place. All contributing authors must sign off on the form before the manuscript is submitted. An example is in Appendix 3.

Authorship Order

The rules for authorship will be different across scenarios and time, mainly due to the highly specialized roles held by team members and differences in professional expectations by discipline. Hence, the PCRC will approach the question of authorship order with flexibility and pragmatism. Generally, the Executive Author will be first author, however this is not always the case. The order of the authors from the authorship team will be negotiated from within the team with the Executive Author assuming the leadership role in all matters of the order of authorship.⁴⁻⁷

JAMA and *BMJ* suggest that each Contributor indicate his/her percent contribution to each part of the research output and that the authorship order reflects the relative contribution. Typically, the list of authors between first and last is nominally ordered according to the degree of participation in the project and paper. The Executive Author should prepare a concise, written statement of how the order of authorship was decided, and submit this using the Manuscript Submission Form, an example of which is in Appendix 2. The PCRC will maintain a record of how authorship order was decided.^{4,6,7} When the research output is something other than a manuscript (e.g., abstract, presentation), the PCRC Publications Committee and Administrative Core maintain documentation of the authorship using the research output proposal form like that outlined in Appendix 1, but no additional forms are needed.

Critical considerations include first author, corresponding author, last author, and group authorship:

First Author:

Generally the highest impact authorship position.⁹ The Executive Author will usually be the first author. However, this must still be clearly negotiated and articulated within the team. When there is a dispute as to the appropriate first author, the relative percent contribution to the research output, analysis and manuscript should be considered. The first author should be the person who contributed most to the work, including writing the first draft of the manuscript. Also, when negotiating around first authorship key options such as corresponding author, last author and group authorship should also be considered.

Last Author:

Generally the second most sought after authorship position, although in many scientific areas the last position carries more status than any other authorship position.^{9,10} In some papers the senior investigator is named last, in others it is the head of the laboratory or department, and in others it is the person who contributed least.¹⁰ The last authorship position must also be negotiated with the team and specifically with the Executive Author and the person selected as the first author. When there is a dispute as to the appropriate last author, the relative percent contribution should be considered by the Executive Author as well as the authorship tradition of placing more senior authors last who provided the team with expert experience, conceptual advice and guidance.⁹

Corresponding Author:

Another commonly sought after authorship position is corresponding author; the person who serves as the contact with the journal or meeting organizers. This is the person who receives the reviewers' comments, publication proofs, etc. Many journals expect this to be a more senior person, unlikely to change roles and move around frequently, and therefore more likely to be in the same locale for correspondence. Some researchers consider this position like the last author position while journal editors view it as an administrative role.⁹ In general, the corresponding author should be either the first or last author as negotiated by the team.

Group Authorship:

Group authorship (also known as corporate or collective authorship) is another authorship option for a PCRC authorship team. Traditional group authorship is where the name of the group is listed instead individual names; modified group authorship includes the names of a few individuals followed by the name of the group. Group authorship allows all investigators to share credit equally. As of April 2001, MEDLINE places the authorship group in a separate collective name field. When there is modified group authorship the named authors are in the author fields and the group name is in the title field. Science Citation Index lists all authors in the group as if they were individual authors by listed presentation in the manuscript (e.g. if the list were prepared alphabetically the first listed individual will also be considered first author). Group authorship is useful for dealing with a large group of authors, but historically carries the risk of poorer indexing and less frequent citations; a problem that journals are currently working to ameliorate.¹¹ If Group Authorship is selected, the members of the writing group must be clearly delineated and the order of authors listed in the group manuscript must still be negotiated, as per the contribution guidelines above or in alphabetical order.

Statistician:

The study statistician(s) is/are an important member(s) of the PCRC Authorship Team. The placement of the study statistician(s) in the authorship order should reflect the considerable input of the statistician in a project, when appropriate. For example, for main results of large clinical trials, the study statistician should be considered for the second author position. Whenever there is a question, the relative percent contribution to the research output, analysis and manuscript of each author including the statistician(s) should be considered in order to inform authorship order; the Executive Author oversees this process.

Conflict Resolution

The ICMJE encourages all groups of researchers to establish procedures to resolve conflicts arising through disputes about authorship.¹

In the event that there is a dispute or concern about authorship, the conflict will be resolved with the help of the PCRC Publications Committee and PCRC Steering Committee. If any

committee member, PCRC investigator, or potential/actual author requests an external independent review, a special committee can be convened specifically to address authorship conflict; a quorum for such a meeting is 3 and minutes of all meetings will be maintained.

If it becomes evident that an Executive Author or Contributor needs or wants to be removed from an authorship team (e.g. inability to meet deadlines or participate in team discussions, membership in multiple other teams), the person can write to the PCRC Publications Committee Chairperson to indicate that they withdraw from the team. Otherwise, the person can only be removed from the authorship team through a decision by the process described above.

An important component of authorship is preparation of abstracts, presentations and manuscripts, and getting the product out in a timely manner. The Authorship Team's document will include a goal date for submission of the proposed research output. The Executive Author is responsible for time management. If the research output is not prepared by four months after the goal date, the Executive Author will receive a 1st reminder from the PCRC Administrative Core that the product is pending. If the product is still not ready one month later, a 2nd reminder will be issued. If the product is still not ready one month after the 2nd reminder, the PCRC Administrative Core will submit a notice to the PCRC Publications Committee to make a decision regarding replacing the Executive Author and reorganizing the Authorship Team. Similarly, all members of the authorship team will be held to a 4-week turnaround for each new version of a document that needs review; failure to do so put authorship in jeopardy which will be dealt with in consultation with the PCRC Publications Committee and the Executive Author. This plan assumes that the data are available for summary and write up. If the data are not available, then the timeline will be reset when the data become available. Also, the Executive Author can request revisions to the goal submission date by submitting a request to the PCRC Publications Committee, via the Administrative Core; if this request is approved, the PCRC publications timelines are updated using the form like the one presented in Appendix 4, and documentation of the amended expectations will be maintained.

Disclosures

The PCRC recognizes that financial and academic conflicts of interest (COI) are common, and that while disclosure is not entirely preventive, disclosure assists in ensuring the potential biases of COI and sponsorship are transparent and understood. The PCRC Administrative Core will maintain documentation of COI disclosure statements for all investigators according to the PCRC's COI management process. Similarly, the PCRC Administrative Core will maintain documentation of COI disclosure statements for other authors on PCRC manuscripts that are not already covered by the usual PCRC COI disclosure process. The PCRC Administrative Core will document source(s) of funding for all PCRC work products, and this will be maintained in the logs as outlined in Appendices 1 and 5. All PCRC manuscripts will include complete COI and funding disclosure statements for all authors.

The PCRC Steering Committee oversees the COI management process, in concert with an Independent Reviewer. Potential concerns and recommendations will be submitted to the PCRC Publications Committee and PCRC Co-PIs for review and action.

Reporting

The PCRC Administrative Core will report to the PCRC Publications Committee quarterly regarding publications, academic output, authorship participation, conflicts, conflict resolution, and timeliness, using a report outline like that presented in Appendix 5. The PCRC Steering Committee will receive a summary review yearly.

References

1. International Committee of Medical Journal Editors. 2009. Uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals. http://www.icmje.org/ethical_1author.html
2. International Committee of Medical Journal Editors. Statements from the Vancouver Group. *BMJ*. 299; 1394, 1989.
3. Huth EJ. *Writing and Publishing in Medicine*. 3rd Ed. Williams and Wilkins, Baltimore, 1999, pp 42-44.
4. Rennie D, Yank V, Emanuel L. When authorship fails. A proposal to make contributors accountable. *JAMA*. 278:579-85, 1997.
5. Horton R. The signature of responsibility. *Lancet*. 350:5-6, 1997.
6. Smith R. Authorship is dying: long live contributorship. *BMJ*. 315; 696, 2001.
7. Smith R. Maintaining the integrity of the scientific record. *BMJ*. 323; 588, 2001.
8. JAMA Authorship Statement. *JAMA* 288; 114, 2002.
9. Albert T, Wager E. How to handle authorship disputes: a guide for new researchers. 2003. Committee on Publication Ethics. <http://publicationethics.org/files/u2/2003pdf12.pdf>
10. Bhopal RS, Rankin JM, McColl E, Stacy R, Pearson PH, Kaner EFS, Thomas LH, Vernon BG, Rodgers H. Team approach to assigning authorship order is recommended. *BMJ*. 314; 1046, 1997.
11. Dickersin K, Scherer R, Sri Tyas Suci E, Gil-Montero Michelle. Problems with indexing and citation of articles with group authorship. *JAMA*. 287; 2772-4, 2003.

Appendix 1

Palliative Care Research Cooperative Group Research Output Proposal Form

[This is an electronic form. The Executive Author initiates and completes the form, with support from the Administrative Core. It is anticipated that most PCRC authors are already registered and listed as “active” in the PCRC database, so that when an author’s name is entered, the database can automatically pull updated address and email information; all individuals who are listed as “active” in the PCRC database should also have an annual Conflict of Interest (COI) form completed and reviewed. If the named author is not in the PCRC database, then the Executive Author provides an email address so that PCRC Administrative Core staff can register the individual in the database and get the author’s COI form completed. Other information, like the PCRC protocols and journal names, are maintained in the PCRC database; when the topic is development of the PCRC itself, the Protocol Number is PCRC00-00 and the name is “The Palliative Care Research Cooperative Group”. Once this Research Output Form is complete, an electronic copy is sent to the Executive Author and the Administrative Care staff, and Research Output information is added to the running PCRC Authorship Teams Agenda and other related reports.]

PCRC Protocol Number: [choose from list]

PCRC Protocol: [automatically populated field, based upon protocol number]

PCRC Research Output Number: [automatically generated by database]

Executive Author: [choose from list]

Other Authors: [choose from list; if not in list, add as “Other” and include name and email address]

Topic:

Output type: [manuscript, abstract, presentation, other (describe)]

Sponsor (funder) of this Research Output: [choose from list, or other (describe)]

Intended Forum for First Submission: [choose from a list of journals, conferences, or other (describe)]

Planned Submission Date:

Comments:

Signed: [electronic signature]

Appendix 2

Palliative Care Research Cooperative Group Manuscript Submission Form

[This is an electronic form. The Executive Author initiates and completes the form, with support from the Administrative Core. All PCRC authors should already be registered and listed as “active” in the PCRC database, so that when an author’s name is entered, the database can automatically pull updated address and email information; all individuals who are listed as “active” in the PCRC database should also have an annual Conflict of Interest (COI) form completed and reviewed. If the named author is not in the PCRC database, then the Executive Author provides an email address so that PCRC Administrative Core staff can register the individual in the database and get the author’s COI form completed. Once this Manuscript Submission Form is complete, an electronic copy is sent to the Executive Author and the Administrative Care staff, and the Authorship Declaration Forms are distributed to all authors.]

PCRC Protocol Number: [choose from list]

PCRC Protocol: [automatically populated field, based upon protocol number]

PCRC Research Output Number: [choose from list]

Manuscript Name:

Intended Place for First Submission:

Executive Author: [choose from list]

Corresponding Author: [choose from list]

Other Authors: [choose from list and indicate order; if not in list, add as “Other” and include name and email address]

How was the authorship order determined? [brief description]

Signed: [electronic signature]

Appendix 3

Palliative Care Research Cooperative Group Authorship Declaration

[This is an electronic form that is generated in response to the PCRC Manuscript Submission Form. A link to the form is sent to all authors for completion and approval. Each author reviews the form, completes required elements, and provides an electronic signature for confirmation. A final electronic copy of the form is sent to each author for confirmation. Once all of the forms are complete, a summary is sent to the Executive Author and PCRC Administrative Staff, and the manuscript is ready for submission.]

The following manuscript is being submitted for publication based upon work conducted by the Palliative Care Research Cooperative Group (PCRC). I, [ENTER NAME] , attest that the manuscript meets expectations for authorship and ethical study conduct, as set forth in the PCRC Authorship Protocol. I have reviewed and commented on the draft and final manuscripts. Manuscript details, authorship order and contributions are as outlined below; I agree that these are correct. My conflict of interest statement with the PCRC is up to date, and my conflicts, if any, are appropriately reflected in the manuscript and/or covering letter to the journal.

Manuscript Name: [automatically populated field, based upon Manuscript Submission Form]

Intended Journal for First Submission: [automatically populated field, based upon Manuscript Submission Form]

Executive Author: [automatically populated field, based upon Manuscript Submission Form]

Corresponding Author: [automatically populated field, based upon Manuscript Submission Form]

Authors (in order): [automatically populated field(s), based upon Manuscript Submission Form]

My contribution to the manuscript included:

1. Check at least 1 of the 3 below:
 - Conception and design
 - Acquisition of data
 - Analysis and interpretation of data
2. Check at least 1 of 2 below:
 - Drafting of the manuscript
 - Critical revision of the manuscript for important intellectual content
3. Check at least 1 of below:
 - Statistical analysis
 - Obtaining funding
 - Administrative, technical, or material support
 - Supervision
 - No addition contributions
 - Other (specify)

I would like my name to be listed as: [First, Middle initial, Last, Suffix]

I would like my affiliation to be listed as: [Organization, address, email address]

Signed: [electronic signature]

Appendix 4

Palliative Care Research Cooperative Group Monitoring Research Output

[This is an electronic monitoring form. Each time there is a new publication or presentation activity, the PCRC Administrative Core completes this form in order to update the running Authorship Team Agenda and Research Output Reports. Different sections of the form correspond to different types of activity. For example, if someone from the PCRC Administrative Core is copied on the circulation of a manuscript draft, then this form is lodged to document activity. This form can also be used to update submission plans. As a manuscript is accepted, In Press, in the page proof stage, and fully published, this is lodged. Any time a presentation or other research output is finalized, it is saved in the PCRC central file and this form is updated. Use of forms and a database ensures that there is complete documentation of PCRC publication activity and dates.]

PCRC Protocol Number: [choose from list]

PCRC Protocol: [automatically populated field, based upon protocol number]

PCRC Research Output Number: [choose from list]

Executive Author: [automatically populated field, based upon research output number]

Topic: [automatically populated field, based upon research output number]

Output type: [automatically populated field, based upon research output number]

Intended Place for First Submission: [automatically populated field, based upon research output number]

Planned Submission Date: [automatically populated field, based upon research output number]

[Complete this section if the forum for first submission needs to be revised]

Updated Forum for First Submission: [choose from a list of journals, conferences, or other (describe)]

Updated Planned Submission Date:

Comments:

[Complete this section when data availability information changes]

Anticipated Dataset Lock Date:

Anticipated Date the Analytic Summary will be Available:

Comments:

[Complete this section if a draft version of the manuscript, abstract or presentation is being circulated]

Manuscript or Other Draft Circulated: [choose from authorship list]

Author Distributing Draft: [choose from authorship list]

Circulation Date:

Comments:

[Complete this section if a new manuscript is submitted]

Submission Forum: [choose from a list of journals or other (describe)]

Submission Date:

Comments:

[Complete this section if manuscript decision is received]

Decision: [provisionally accept, revise and resubmit, accept, reject]

Decision Date:

Expected Resubmission Date (if appropriate):

If rejected, why:
Comments:

[Complete this section if a revised manuscript is submitted]
Submission Date:
Comments:

[Complete this section if a revised manuscript decision is received]
Decision: [provisionally accept, revise and resubmit, accept, reject]
Decision Date:
Expected Resubmission Date (if appropriate):
Comments:

[Complete this section when page proofs of an accepted manuscript are approved]
Page Proofs Receipt Date:
PCRC Page Proofs Approval and Response Date:
Comments:

[Complete this section if the final manuscript is published]
Published Date:
Full Citation:
Comments:

[Complete this section if an abstract is submitted]
Submission Forum: [choose from a list of conferences, or other (describe)]
Submission Date:
Comments:

[Complete this section if an abstract decision is received]
Decision: [accept, reject]
Decision Date:
Presentation Method: [poster, oral]
Comments:

[Complete this section if a presentation is completed or other]
Presentation Forum: [choose from a list of conferences, or other (describe)]
Presentation Date:
Comments:

[Complete this section if the manuscript or abstract is rejected, and to be sent to another forum]
Forum for Revised Submission: [choose from a list of journals, conferences, or other (describe)]
Planned Revised Submission Date:
Comments:

Signed: [electronic signature]

Appendix 5

Palliative Care Research Cooperative Group Planned and Actual Research Output

[These reports are generated by the PCRC database. The sections of the annual report detailing conflicts and other concerns can updated by hand based upon confidential records, and should be maintained in a confidential report that is not distributed beyond the PCRC Publications and Steering Committee.]

PCRC Research Output - Running Agenda

Topic	Output #	Sponsor	Exec Author	Author Team	Output Type	Planned Forum	Planned Date	Last Action	Last Action Date	Data & Stats Availability	Comments
PCRC Protocol		[Protocol # & Name]									

PCRC Completed Research Output

Topic	Output #	Sponsor	Exec Author	Author Team	Output Type	Forum	Date	Citation
PCRC Protocol		[Protocol # & Name]						

Palliative Care Research Cooperative Group Annual Research Output Summary

PCRC Publications and Presentations in [calendar year]			
PCRC Protocol		[Protocol # & Name]	
Manuscripts		Annual Total [#]	Cumulative Total [#]
[Citation]			
Abstracts, Presentations and Other		Annual Total [#]	Cumulative Total [#]
[Citation]			
Authors Involved in PCRC Publication Activities [CONFIDENTIAL REPORT]			
[Author Name]	Annual Total PCRC Publications: [#]	Cumulative Total PCRC Publications: [#]	[Timeline Concerns, Conflicts of Interest or Other Issues]
PCRC Authorship Conflicts and Resolution [CONFIDENTIAL REPORT]			
[Issue/Activity]		[Resolution/Date]	