- **LETTERS**

THE BUZZ
Honorary Authorship
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In *Science* Magazine

- **EDITORIAL** EDITORIAL:[Ending Honorary Authorship](#)
- *Philip Greenland, Phil B. Fontanarosa*

In their 31 August Editorial (p. [1019](#)), P. Greenland and P. B. Fontanarosa called on researchers to put an end to honorary authorship. Honorary authorship remains common; researchers add the names of prominent scientists to boost their paper's credibility, and senior scientists demand that their names be added to the work of younger researchers. Greenland and Fontanarosa assert that adding authors who did not contribute directly is fraudulent, and they urge journals, research institutions, and senior scientists to address the problem. Readers wrote in to add their perspectives, many with their own experiences of being pressured to add authors to their work. Excerpts from some of these comments are below. You can read all the comments athttp://comments.sciencemag.org/content/10.1126/science.1224988.

A selection of your thoughts:…

[A]sking all authors to take credit for the whole of the work is potentially problematic and might dampen willingness to collaborate. Taking credit for what you have contributed and being willing and aware of the entire content of a paper might be a reasonable compromise.…—**Jim Woodgett**…

Since they are named on the grant, most PIs and co-investigators will want their names on project papers regardless of whether they have contributed to the published work or not.…—**Nick Riviera**…

If you want this to work, journals should remove author names and affiliations while sending papers for review.…—**Ram Subramanian**

The final paragraph [of the Editorial] suggests that it will be the senior scientists that will set an example for the younger generation. I suspect it will be the opposite, that our students will learn how to do it right despite us. As the wise man said, "Science advances funeral by funeral."—**David Barnert**…

At what point should a PI be dropped from the author list? They are, after all, usually responsible for the whole research project, even if the actual number of conversations held with the first author is minimal. Should a PI who becomes essentially a manager and behind-the-scenes… advocate for the science of others never be author of a paper? —**Julia Hargreaves**…

[T]he community must close existing loopholes in academic authorship standards, such as...research projects [that] share their data only with researchers who agree to add the respective consortium to the author list of published papers using these data.... [T]hese groups declare that by including a footnote in which they renounce authorship, they are merely claiming credit as non-author contributors....Future authorship standards should, therefore, clearly state that only authors may be listed on the author byline....At the same time, incentive systems for contributions such as data or software should be created to reduce the perceived need for quid pro quo authorships. Researchers who provide resources to the community should be able to list these contributions in their résumés, and equal consideration should be given to these and traditional publications in funding and promotion decisions. —**Torsten Rohlfing**