

“Reflections on copyright and scientific paper”

The reality of the scientific production in our country, in this beginning of century, confronts with some situations, among many others, which are highly challenging and deserve special attention, such as the question of the copyright, which has disquieted many researchers. Certainly, several articles may be able to help the reader in the deepening of this matter. However, there are authors who offer us updated, consistent and indispensable knowledge for those who, somehow, search for clarifications on the ethical and legal aspects of the authorship of scientific works and that, therefore, are the references used in this editorial.

In a very accurate way, José Roberto Goldin, Professor of the Federal University of Rio Grande Do Sul, (Doctor in Bioethics, Professor of the UFRS – official site: www.bioetica.ufrgs.br/), affirms that the authorship of projects, articles and books is one of the ethical issues that has brought up remarkable concern lately. In his words: the omission of authors, the improper inclusion and the improper use of research material are awkward and extremely worrying facts, nonetheless, present in all the countries of the world where research is carried out.

Since 1988, in Canada, they have established clear criteria for the characterization of the authorship by the *International Committee of Medical Journal Editors*¹. For this committee, the credits of rights must be based only on substantial contributions for the conception, planning, analysis or interpretation of the data, writing of the article, or its critical intellectual revision and responsibility for the final approval for publication. The participation only in the raising of funds, or the collection of data does not justify authorship. An article of collective authorship must specify the responsible person for the article as a whole. This way, the authorship must be assumed only by the investigators that have participated scientifically in the basic form, from the conception to its spreading. Other contributions to the work must be acknowledged separately, under the form of thankfulness. At this point, the heads of the service or department who gave support to the research should be mentioned.²

It is evident that the improper inclusion of authors is a very serious matter. According to Fernandes², friends, heads, colleagues, scholarship holders and trainees do not become authors only due to these relations. This inadequate tradition can and must be prevented by using clear rules for the establishment of the authorship criterion, since the beginning of the planning of the project, avoiding this way, unnecessary embarrassment.

For these authors, the question of the citation order is not well- defined; it is in need of further studies, discussions and clarity of the criteria, as there is not any universally accepted and used indication on this question. However, the traditional approach considers that the first author cited is the responsible one for the work. These rules, nonetheless, have been modified. Some magazines and financing agencies have oriented the citation of the authors by alphabetical order of the last name.

In Brazil, Law 9610/98³, which regulates the copyright, does not consider an author who simply assisted the author in the production of the literary composition, artistic or scientific, revising it, bringing it up to date, as well as inspecting or directing its edition or presentation in any form.

Therefore, if these questions raised here excite more doubts than clarifications, what to say when they are simply not debated or considered? May these be the yearning and the will

of the authors, researchers and especially of the readers of REME: to extend the debate on the ethical and legal aspects of the copyright and scientific production.

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