

TO BE INCLUDED WITH OUTREACH LETTER FROM OSTLTS/MMWR; THEN PLACED ON WEBSITE

FAQs

What is MMWR changing?

On January 1, 2014, *MMWR Weekly* will change its policy on named authorship. Contributors will now be named in accordance with International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) criteria¹ -- the criteria used by the vast majority of medical and public health journals -- and the author with the lead responsibility for the article will be listed first. (Up until this point, *MMWR Weekly* had a policy of listing non-CDC contributors first in its “Reported by” section regardless of the level of individual effort amongst contributors.)

What are the benefits of doing this?

This change will allow PubMed to index *MMWR Weekly* articles by author names, in the correct order. This will enhance discoverability of topical articles, increase the desirability of *MMWR Weekly* as a publication venue, increase accountability for authors, and increase the quality of submitted articles.

Will the indexing by name be retroactive to *MMWR Weekly* articles published prior to 2014?

No, it is not possible to change these listings retroactively.

Does this change mean that STLTs must always take the lead on *MMWR Weekly* articles resulting from joint STLT-CDC projects?

No. When more than one person or more than one agency is involved in a project, the parties involved must jointly determine who the lead author will be. Typically, the person who leads or performs the majority of the intellectual work has the “right of first refusal” for the lead author role. CDC’s policy for articles written by CDC staff is that the lead author is responsible for the integrity of the work as a whole and for providing leadership to coauthors in determining writing assignments and authorship order, providing direction for reviews and revisions, and compiling drafts.

How do STLT and CDC colleagues determine authorship order?

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

CDC's policy is that authorship credit should be based on three criteria, all of which must be met:

- (i) Substantial contributions to conception and design, or acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data;
- (ii) Drafting the information product or revising it critically for important intellectual content; and
- (iii) Final approval of the version to be published.

MMWR Weekly further recommends that authorship order, including choice of first author, be based upon the level of contribution to the article and the work underlying it.

Does MMWR decide or help to negotiate authorship order?

No. Decisions about authorship must be made jointly by the involved co-authors.

How will articles that have already been accepted by *MMWR Weekly* be handled?

MMWR will notify authors of already-accepted articles of this change and will publish them according to the new policy starting with the first issue of the next volume on January 10, 2014.

Is the authorship rule changing for other MMWR series?

No. *MMWR Surveillance Summaries*, *MMWR Recommendations and Reports*, and *MMWR Supplements* already follow the authorship policy now being adopted by *MMWR Weekly*.

If a STLT has a question or concern about authorship for work in an investigation or other joint project with CDC, who do we talk to?

STLT staff should raise any concerns with their CDC colleagues and attempt to resolve them directly. This applies to authorship as well as other issues. However, in the event that this does not resolve the issue, questions can be sent to the CDC Office of State, Tribal, Local, and Territorial Support Field Staff Connect mailbox fsconnect@cdc.gov, attn: Senior Liaison Services. A representative from this office will liaise with the involved parties to attempt to resolve the question.