

Ethiopian Public Health Institute



National Data Management Center for health (NDMC)

1st version

Data Ownership and Authorship

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Data Ownership and Authorship

1. Data Ownership

Data ownership has operational responsibilities in assisting Data Stewards with day-to-day data administration activities; including, but is not limited to: develop, maintain, distribute, and secure institutional data. Data Owners are expected to have high-level knowledge and expertise in the content of data within their responsible area. This role is also the organizational Data Custodian.

Data owner is an entity that can collect and store data, authorize or deny access to certain data, and is responsible for its accuracy, integrity, and timeliness. Practical issues with respect to data ownership including who can possess data, and who can publish reports or articles about it are often complicated issues. It is also related to questions of project funding, affiliations, and the sources and forms of the research itself. At EPHI, ownership of data involves at least 3 different entities: EPHI, the funding agency, and the PI. In many cases, EPHI owns the project data, but the PI and the funding agency have "rights" to access and use the data. Usually the PI has physical custody of the data on behalf of the institution. It is also important to consider data ownership from the perspective of individuals who suggest research ideas and/or participate in the research.

1.1 Criteria for data ownership

1. EPHI maintains ownership of a project's data for a project whose PI is employee of the institute and is assigned by the institute. The institute controls all funding or the disbursement of government funding; consequently, it is also responsible for ensuring that funded research is conducted responsibly and ethically. Within EPHI, a PI is granted stewardship over the project data.
2. The funding agencies will enter into an agreement with EPHI to maintain co-ownership of the data. Funding agencies often have specific stipulations for how data will be retained and disseminated: for example, they decide whether to publish the project's results rather than the PI. EPHI and the PI should understand the funding agency's regulations regarding a research project and the data it produces and should align it with EPHI data management requirements.
3. An EPHI staff who is assigned to be a Principal Investigator (PI) in EPHI's partnership project is the steward of a project's data. The rights and ownership of data remains with EPHI and with the funding agency, unless otherwise stipulated.

4. An EPHI staff who initiated/proposed its own collaborative research project, will co-own the data with EPHI and the funding agency. In this case, the PI in addition to being the steward of a project's data, she/he retain some ownership of the data. The PI is allowed to take her/his and its data with them if they change research institutions. Such a transfer of data respects both the rights of the researcher and those of the institution.

1.2 Data Owner General Procedure

- a. Data Owners will use physical controls, software and other methods to protect and monitor access to Data and/or systems that host that Data.
- b. Data owner should ensure the security and data storage of the data in the central data warehouse of EPHI.
- c. Data Owners, Data Custodians and Users of Information Resources will be identified and their responsibilities defined and documented
- d. In cases where Information Resources are used by more than one major business function, the Data Owners will reach consensus and advise the designated owner responsible for the Information Resources
- e. The Data must be retained based on the Data retention period set out in the data management plan document.

1.3 Responsibilities of data owner

- Ensuring compliance with the terms of research agreements;
- Protecting the rights of researchers, including, but not limited to, their rights to access to data from research in which they participated;
- Securing intellectual property rights;
- Facilitating the investigation of charges such as research misconduct or financial conflicts of interest
- Maintaining appropriate confidentiality and security protections over research data.

2. Authorship and contribution

2.1 Authorship

Authorship confers credit and has important academic, social, and financial implications. Authorship also implies responsibility and accountability for published work. It is necessary to develop and implement a contributorship policy to remove much of the ambiguity surrounding contributions and authorship to underscore contribution that qualify an individual for authorship. The International committee for Journal editors has recommended the following four criteria to

ensure that contributors who have made substantive intellectual contributions to a paper are given credit as authors, but also that contributors credited as authors understand their role in taking responsibility and being accountable for what is published. According to the recommendation, an author should fulfill at least one of the first three and the fourth criteria:

1. Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work;
2. Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content;
3. Final approval of the version to be published;
4. Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

Authors are accountable for the parts of the work they have done and should have confidence in the integrity of the contributions of their co-authors. These authorship criteria are intended to reserve the status of authorship for those who deserve credit and can take responsibility for the work. When a large multi-author group has conducted the work, all members of the group named as authors should meet the above set criteria for authorship, including approval of the final manuscript, and they should be able to take public responsibility for the work and should have full confidence in the accuracy and integrity of the work of other group authors. They will also be expected as individuals to complete conflict-of-interest disclosure forms.

Finally, authorship also conveys responsibility. Authors must represent their work fairly and accurately, avoid conflicts of interest, and ensure impartiality. All authors are responsible for the overall accuracy and quality of the work product, and may be liable for research misconduct associated with its content.

2.2 Non-Author Contributors

Contributors who are unable to meet the above criteria for authorship should not be listed as authors, but they should be acknowledged.

Examples are:

- i. Activities that alone (without other contributions) do not qualify a contributor for authorship are acquisition of funding; general supervision of a research group or general administrative support; and writing assistance, technical editing, language editing, and proofreading.
- ii. Those whose contributions do not justify authorship may be acknowledged individually or together as a group under a single heading (e.g. "Clinical Investigators" or "Participating Investigators"), and their contributions should be specified (e.g., "served as scientific advisors," "critically reviewed the study

proposal," "collected data," "provided and cared for study patients", "participated in writing or technical editing of the manuscript").