Patients with CS may first present to dermatologists with a wide and heterogeneous spectrum of dermatological features, which should be recognized and lead to a prompt referral to an endocrinologist. A timely diagnosis and treatment of CS is essential, not only to prevent the metabolic and cardiovascular complications, but also to improve the patient’s quality of life. As illustrated here, CS-related dermatologic manifestations may significantly and rapidly improve after prompt therapy targeting the cortisol overproduction.

AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

MIA: Conception of the manuscript.
PMG, PM: Critical review of the manuscript.

PROTECTION OF HUMANS AND ANIMALS

The authors have followed the protocols of their work center on the publication of data. The data was anonymized and none of the authors had access to patient identification. The study was conducted in accordance with the Helsinki Declaration updated in 2013.

DATA CONFIDENTIALITY

The authors declare having followed the protocols in use at their working center regarding patients’ data publication.

INFORMED CONSENT OF THE PATIENT

Obtained.

COMPETING INTERESTS

All authors declared no competing interests.

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REFERENCES


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Keywords: Authorship; Ethics; Retraction of Publication as Topic; Scientific Misconduct

Palavras-chave: Autoria; Ética; Má Conduta Científica; Retração de Publicação como Assunto

Dear Editor,

The exponential proliferation of scientific publications in recent decades was accompanied by emerging issues related to ethics in research and publication. In the last five years, Retraction Watch identified 485 retracted papers involving concerns related to authorship,1 with the more frequent issues being disputes concerning right of authorship, fake authorship, forged authorship, bought authorship, ghost authorship and honorary authorship.2

Local ideological concepts of authorship criteria in many clinical and research departments are outdated and do not comply with current international recommendations. Many authors fail to adhere to ethical principles or may not be aware of the definitions of authorship and its criteria. The same issues apply to conference presentations3 which in Portugal may be decisive for medical career progression.

Ethical transgressions related to authorship discredit scientific publications and jeopardize the reputation of authors. We are aware of several widespread misconceptions and unethical historical practices in clinical departments: 1) bestowing authorship to an individual who performed diagnostic tests (e.g. radiology, histology) in the setting of everyday clinical care of patients; 2) the widespread practice of including the head of the department as the senior author in conference papers but also in research publications; 3) bestowing authorship to physicians responsible for the clinical care of patients included in research, despite not participating in the study conception, interpretation of data and draft of the manuscript; 4) extensive reciprocal authorship sharing among residents when submitting conference papers.
There are several guidelines in different fields of research which define the criteria for authorship. The most widely used in the scientific medical literature originate from the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors and comprise all of the following: 1) substantial contribution to the study conception and design, or data acquisition, or analysis and interpretation; 2) drafting or revising the article; 3) approval of the final version; 4) agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work.\(^4\) Strategies which may help to avoid authorship misconduct include definition of authorship prior to study initiation, use of the Acknowledgments section for collaborators who do not fulfil authorship criteria, review of journal authorship guidelines before submitting the manuscript, and increasing awareness of the types of authorship misconduct in the biomedical community.\(^5\)

The topic of ethics and good practices in publication represents a touchstone for science production and communication. It should be included not only in undergraduate but especially in postgraduate medical curricula, in order to honour science and the academia.

**REFERENCES**


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**AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION**

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