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## **Policy of allowing co-first authors and co-corresponding authors who made equal contribution to a manuscript**

With the rapid development of artificial intelligence, big data, and emerging discipline and multi-disciplinary research, more and more research is involving collaboration of experts from different fields to perform impactful investigations into topics from novel and meaningful perspectives. As a result, equal contribution of authors, especially co-first authors and co-corresponding authors, is unavoidable when publishing research results from these studies. To acknowledge the evolution of research towards such equal contributions in publication, Baishideng Publishing Group (Baishideng) has decided to allow co-first authors and co-corresponding authors to be listed in a footnote in Baishideng's journals.

The new policy for consideration and approval of co-first authorship and co-corresponding authorship is structured as follows:

1. Requests for co-first authors or co-corresponding authors will be considered on a limited basis, and the final decision to allow/deny will be made according to the detailed reasons provided by the authors for justification on a case-by-case basis, with allowance permitting no more than two co-first or co-corresponding authors.
2. Co-first authors will not be allowed to be co-corresponding authors and *vice versa*.
3. The example of bibliographic format of co-first or co-corresponding authors is as follows: **Co-first authors:** Jia-Ru Fan and Li Ma; or **Co-corresponding authors:** Jin-Lei Wang and Lian-Sheng Ma.
4. For co-first authors, there should be a statement of support that justifies the equal contribution. This brief but detailed statement will be listed in the **Author contributions**

section and will be based upon the common role of the first author being the person who made the most significant intellectual contribution to the work being published. These contributions include design of the study, acquiring and analyzing data from experiments, and writing of the actual manuscript.

5. For co-corresponding authors, there should be a statement of support that justifies the equal contribution. This brief but detailed statement will be listed in the **Author contributions** section. Moreover, one of the two co-corresponding authors will be designated as the one person who takes primary responsibility for communication with the journal during the manuscript submission, peer review, and publication processes (see #6 below). Normally, he or she also ensures that all the journal's administrative requirements, such as providing details of authorship, ethics committee approval documentation, clinical trial registration documentation, and gathering conflict-of-interest forms and statements, are properly completed, although these duties may be delegated to one or more co-authors.

6. Although co-corresponding authorship may be allowed designation in the **Author contributions** section, the listing of contact information will be provided for only one of the co-corresponding authors. The two co-corresponding authors should choose which one of them will be responsible for all contact and correspondence with the journal. An example of a co-corresponding author responsible for contact is as follows:

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