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A ghost author is someone who is omitted from an authorship list despite qualifying for authorship. This is not necessarily the same as a ghost writer, since omitted authors often perform other roles, in particular data analysis. Gøtzsche *et al*¹ have shown that statisticians involved with study design are frequently omitted from papers reporting industry funded trials. If a professional writer has been involved with a publication, it will depend on the authorship criteria being used whether they fulfil the criteria to be listed as an author. Using the ICMJE criteria for research papers, medical writers usually do not qualify as authors, but their involvement and funding source should be acknowledged.

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2. Wager E. Authors, ghosts, damned lies, and statisticians. *PLoS Med* 2007;4:e34. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.0040034>

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