Deciding Authorship

Dr. Gumshoe is a family physician specialist conducting a clinical trial on a new treatment for foot wounds for people with diabetes. The treatment is a cream she developed. Although all of the compounds in the cream have been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the treatment itself has not. The FDA has classified it as an investigational combination therapy. Dr. Gumshoe has completed the clinical trial, which has demonstrated that the new treatment is twice as effective as current therapy for diabetic foot wounds. She is getting ready to publish a paper and needs to decide (a) who should be an author and (b) the order of authorship. The following people have worked on the project:

- Dr. Gumshoe developed the cream, designed the experiments, interpreted the data, and wrote the paper.
- Dr. Wainwright is a pharmacist who helped Dr. Gumshoe develop the cream, interpret the data, and edit the paper.
- Dr. Sabrunama is a biostatistician who helped to design the experiments and analyze and interpret the data and who read the paper but did not edit it for content.
- Ms. Stetson is a nurse who provided treatment to patients in the study and collected data and who read the paper but did not edit it for content.
- Ms. Williams is a medical student who provided treatment to patients in the study and collected data and who read the paper but did not edit it for content.
- Mr. Gumshoe is Dr. Gumshoe's husband. He has been providing legal assistance to Dr. Gumshoe concerning her FDA and institutional review board applications and patents on the treatment. He read the paper and edited it for style and grammar.
- Mr. Jensen is a pharmacy technician who works for Dr. Wainwright who helped to prepare the treatment.
- Dr. Chu is a colleague of Dr. Gumshoe's. He has discussed the project with her several times over lunch. He encouraged her to initiate the clinical trial and has given her critical feedback.
- Dr. Rogers is a diabetic foot specialist. He has provided Dr. Gumshoe with tissue samples and data that she has used in her study.

Questions
1. Who should be an author?
2. Who should receive an acknowledgment?
3. What should be the authorship order?

**Courtesy Authorship**

Dr. Jonathan Perry, a tenured professor, used his sabbatical to visit the laboratory of Dr. Brian Chandler, a widely published and respected senior scientist. During his stay in Dr. Chandler's lab, Dr. Perry hoped to learn certain techniques of molecular biology that he would employ in his own research. To afford Dr. Perry this opportunity, Dr. Chandler assigned him a leading role in a new project that the lab was undertaking. After seven months, laboratory work on the project was completed, and Dr. Perry returned to his own institution to begin work on a paper to report the final results. Ultimately, many drafts of the paper were faxed back and forth between laboratories until Dr. Perry received the penultimate version from Dr. Chandler's lab. On this version, a new name, J. B. Martin, Ph.D., appeared among the authors listed. Dr. Perry had never met Dr. Martin, never worked with him on any technical aspect of the project, and had never heard his name or ideas mentioned in the laboratory meetings in which the project was planned or the results discussed.

Dr. Perry called Dr. Chandler and questioned the addition of Dr. Martin as an author on the manuscript. Dr. Chandler stated that, due to prior collaborations, it was a longstanding policy to include Dr. Martin on all publications coming out of Dr. Chandler's laboratory. Dr. Martin's laboratory had a reciprocal agreement, he added. Dr. Perry stated that he did not feel that Dr. Martin was a qualified author on this particular paper since he had not made a significant contribution to the work being published. Dr. Chandler replied that Dr. Perry did not have the right to question the policy of a laboratory in which he had worked as an invited guest. Dr. Perry maintained his position that Dr. Martin did not belong as an author on the paper and further stated that if Dr. Chandler insisted on including Dr. Martin's name, then, as first author, Dr. Perry would not allow the paper to be submitted. Dr. Chandler responded, “Well, you can withdraw your name, but the work was done here in my laboratory and we plan to submit the paper for publication.”

**Questions**

1. What do you think of the reciprocal agreement between Dr. Martin's and Dr. Chandler's laboratories? Were Dr. Perry's concerns legitimate?
2. Dr. Perry was a tenured professor at a different institution from Dr. Chandler's. Under these circumstances it may have been relatively easy for him to voice his concerns to Dr. Chandler. What difficulties might a postdoctoral or graduate student in Dr. Chandler's lab have in handling this situation? How might those difficulties be overcome?
3. The results of this project are significant and provide a novel insight into the field that could prove beneficial to many investigators in the area. Therefore, should Dr. Perry compromise with Dr. Chandler so that the paper can be
promptly published? Which consideration -- authorship or publication -- is more important in the advancement of science?

4. What do you think of Dr. Chandler's statement in the concluding sentence of the case? Would it be appropriate for Dr. Chandler to proceed with publishing the paper? What are Dr. Perry's and Dr. Chandler's rights with respect to the data and the publication of the data?

5. Assume that Dr. Martin in fact reviewed and commented on all drafts of the paper in question. Could this contribution to the effort be significant enough to merit authorship?