

Excerpted from “Ethical Guidelines for Statistical Practice”
American Statistical Association, prepared by the Committee on Professional Ethics
Approved by the Board of Directors, August 7, 1999

C. Responsibilities in Publications and Testimony

1. Maintain personal responsibility for all work bearing your name; avoid undertaking work or coauthoring publications for which you would not want to acknowledge responsibility. Conversely, accept (or insist upon) appropriate authorship or acknowledgment for professional statistical contributions to research and the resulting publications or testimony.
2. Report statistical and substantive assumptions made in the study.
3. In publications or testimony, identify who is responsible for the statistical work if it would not otherwise be apparent.
4. Make clear the basis for authorship order, if determined on grounds other than intellectual contribution. Preferably, authorship order in statistical publications should be by degree of intellectual contribution to the study and to the material to be published, to the extent that such ordering can feasibly be determined. When some other rule of authorship order is used in a statistical publication, the rule used should be disclosed in a footnote or endnote. (Where authorship order by contribution is assumed by those making decisions about hiring, promotion, or tenure, for example, failure to disclose an alternative rule may improperly damage or advance careers.)
5. Account for all data considered in a study and explain the sample(s) actually used.
6. Report the sources and assessed adequacy of the data.
7. Report the data cleaning and screening procedures used, including any imputation.
8. Clearly and fully report the steps taken to guard validity. Address the suitability of the analytic methods and their inherent assumptions relative to the circumstances of the specific study. Identify the computer routines used to implement the analytic methods.
9. Where appropriate, address potential confounding variables not included in the study.
10. In publications or testimony, identify the ultimate financial sponsor of the study, the stated purpose, and the intended use of the study results.
11. When reporting analyses of volunteer data or other data not representative of a defined population, include appropriate disclaimers.
12. Report the limits of statistical inference of the study and possible sources of error. For example, disclose any significant failure to follow through fully on an agreed sampling or analytic plan and explain any resulting adverse consequences.
13. Share data used in published studies to aid peer review and replication, but exercise due caution to protect proprietary and confidential data, including all data which might inappropriately reveal respondent identities.
14. As appropriate, promptly and publicly correct any errors discovered after publication.
15. Write with consideration of the intended audience. (For the general public, convey the scope, relevance, and conclusions of a study without technical distractions. For the professional literature, strive to answer the questions likely to occur to your peers.)