

Gift authorship is common in Cochrane reviews

Objectives

- To determine the prevalence of gift and ghost authors in Cochrane reviews
- To investigate possible predictors of inappropriate authorship

Methods

- Internet-based survey
- Sent to first authors of Cochrane reviews published from October 2016 to December 2018
- An e-mail with a link to the survey was sent to 1,226 first authors (Figure 2)
- Responses were anonymized prior to data extraction

Key results

- Response rate: 54% (666/1,226)
- Prevalence of gift authors: 41% (Figure 1)
- Prevalence of ghost authors: 2%
- First authors not aware of ICMJE authorship guidelines: 15%
- Factors associated with the existence of gift authorship:
 - Not being aware of ICMJE authorship guidelines ($p=0.006$)
 - An increasing number of authors ($p<0.001$)
 - First author had previously in academic career offered an illegitimate authorship ($p=0.005$)

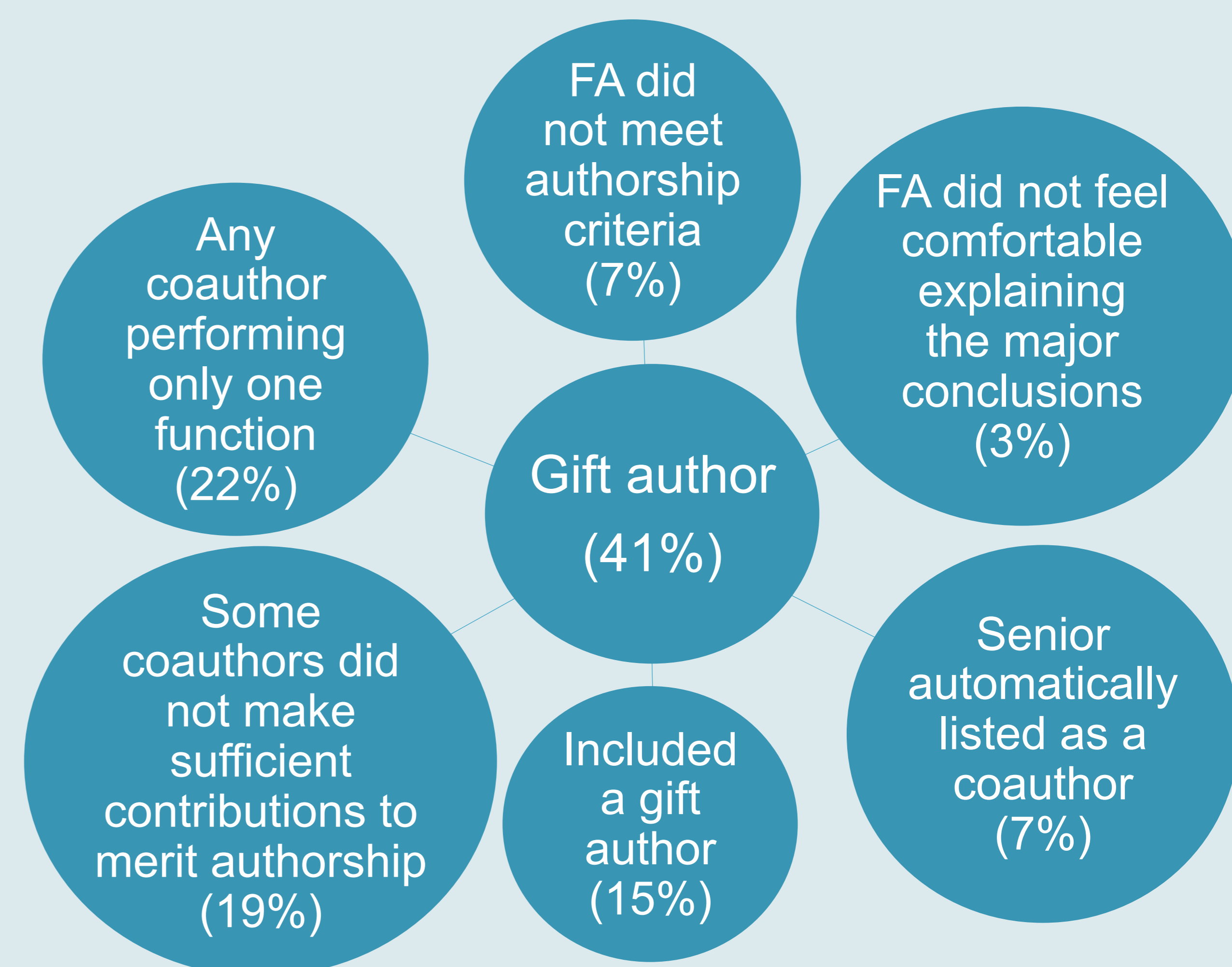


Figure 1. Prevalence of gift and ghost authors in Cochrane reviews (Note: FA = first author)

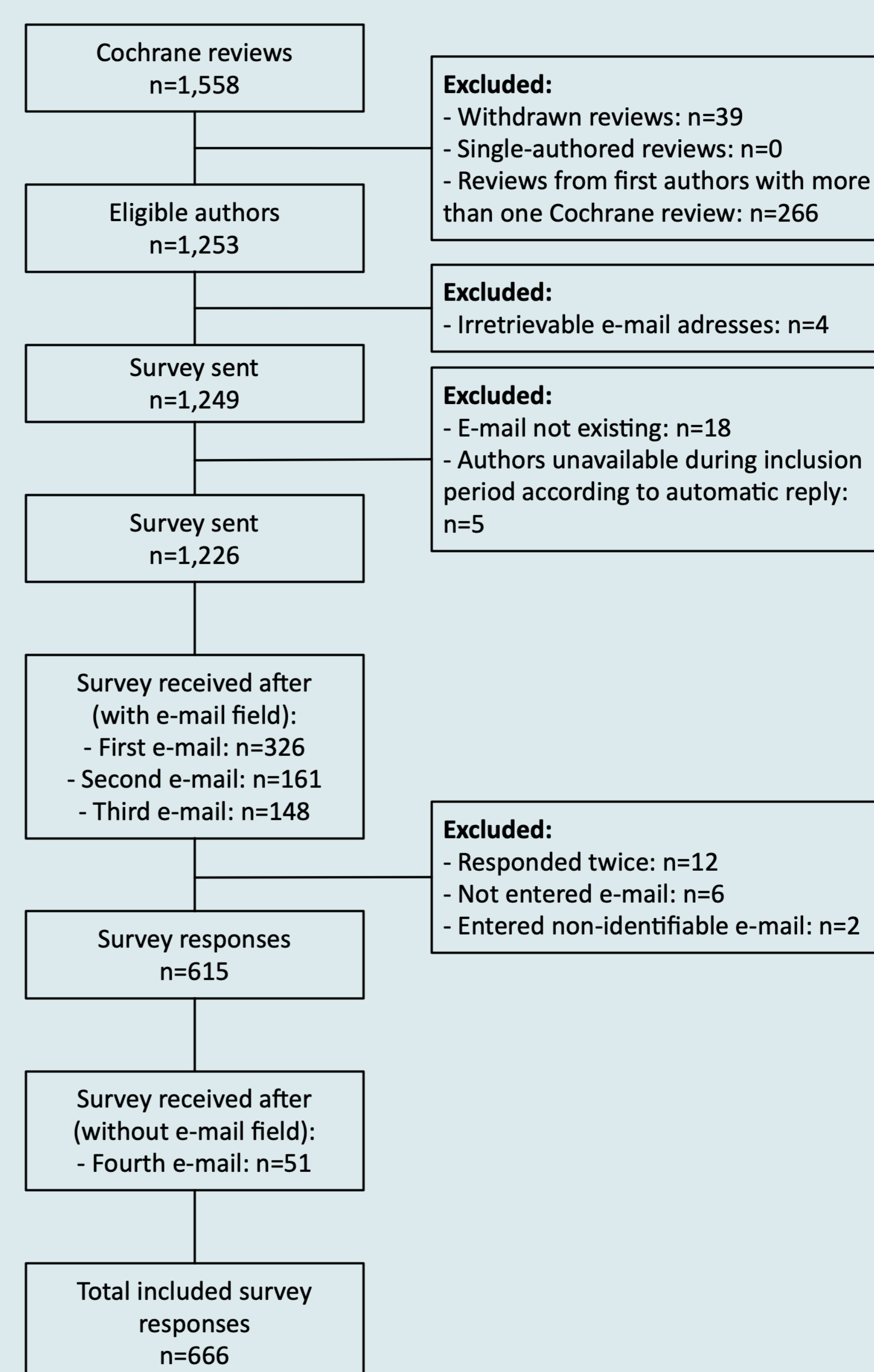


Figure 2. Flowchart showing survey steps

Sengül Gülen¹, Siv Fønnes^{1,2}, Kristoffer Andresen^{1,2}, Jacob Rosenberg^{1,2}

¹ Center for Perioperative Optimization, Department of Surgery, Herlev and Gentofte Hospitals, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

² Cochrane Colorectal Group

E-mail: sengulgulen12@gmail.com

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