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Letter to the Editor

The ranking of scientists

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Letter to the Editor (Response from author)

Title: The ranking of scientists

First of all, I would like to thank all the colleagues who showed interest in my article and sent their comments. In two letters, which the editor selected to publish in the journal, the authors have raised some important issues related to the evaluation of scientific productivity and the ranking of scientists. The authors emphasized three main shortcomings of the Z-score criteria: (1) the author's contribution is overly simplistic and it could not be applicable in all scientific fields; (2) these criteria do not evaluate the publication according to different types of citations, focusing simply on the number of citations; and (3) Z-score criteria omit other activities typically used in judging scientific and academic promotions.

I do not agree with Weng et al. that "... as the number of authors increases, the formula increasingly emphasizes the contributions of the first author and the corresponding author and de-emphasizes the contributions of other authors, without distinguishing contributions among them..." According to the Z-score, in an article with only two authors, each author gets 100% credit, yet, in an article with more than two authors, the second author should not receive more privileges compared to the third but share 100% credit with all of the remaining authors. Such a method for awarding extra credit prevents a domino effect of requests whereby the third author could then question not being given privileges over the fourth author and so on. It is indisputable that the first and the corresponding author have the most important roles during the research as well and they generally are the only authors to participate in the review process and post-publication activities. Therefore, I think that giving extra credit to the first and corresponding author is justified.

I agree that "modern science, especially biomedical science, is increasingly dependent on interdisciplinary collaborations" [2]. Therefore, the Z-score suggests the calculation of author credits by doubling the value (200%) of an article (even though it would be much simpler to

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