

EDITORIAL

WHAT'S IN A NAME? (Writing the Author's Name in Scientific Publications)

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Whenever the question "What's in a Name" is raised, the quick answer is "Everything", which most succinctly sums up the importance in a name.

One is reminded of the famous quote from Shakespeare's *Romeo & Juliet* (II,ii,1-2,) when Juliet Capulet responds to the surname of Romeo Montague, who comes from a rival warring clan in the city of Verona:

*"What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet."*

When a child is delivered from a mother's womb, (and nowadays even before that happens) the primary concern of the parents is what name to give the child. They may search for a name in the vast web pages.

The power of a name and its significance has long been immortalized through the period of a person's life in his achievements, milestones, genealogy, documents and social and religious events. Everyone is recognised by his or her name. No introduction of a person to another is complete or meaningful without mention of the person's name.

It is normal that original articles are peer reviewed before acceptance for publication in indexed journals. The publishing of articles is a prerequisite for monitoring and evaluating the performance and promotion of staff in academic or public institutions. The "correct and standard" format in writing the author's name is of paramount importance, to facilitate when accessing various search engines, to procure information for citation of such articles through identifying the name of the author and the title of the article.

Common Variations

If the name of the author is not denoted in the same form or style throughout one's writing life, then there is likelihood that some of the articles may be missed out when search is conducted. For instance, the name of the same author (Khalid bin Abdul Kadir) in the following articles is named in various forms:

*Thai AC, Mohan V, **Khalid BAK**, Cockram CS, Pan CY, Zimmet P, Yeo JP and the ASDIAB Study Group (2008) Islet autoimmunity status in Asians with young-onset diabetes (12-40 years): association with clinical characteristics, beta cell function and cardiometabolic risk factors. Diab Res Clin Pract 2008; 80; 224 – 230*

*YY Chia, SH Toh, **KBA Kadir** (2009) Effects of glycyrrholic acid on 11 beta hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase (11BHSD1 and 11BHSD2) activities and HOMA IR in rats at different treatment periods; Expl Clin Endocrinol Diabetes*

*W.Y.A Lim, YY Chia, S.Y. Leong, S.H. Ton, **K.A. Kadir**, S.N.A Hussein (2009) Lipoprotein lipase expression, serum lipid and tissue lipid deposit in orally administered glycyrrhizic acid treated rats.; Lipids In Health & Disease; 2009, 8:31*

Another example of this variation in form of the same author is given below:

*Chee Yew Cheok, Jamal Azmi Mohamad, **Tunku Sara Ahmad**. Pain relief for reduction of acute anterior shoulder dislocations: A prospective randomized study comparing intravenous sedation with intra-articular lidocaine. J Orthop Trauma 2011;25:5-10*

*Low TH, **Ahmad TS**, Ng ES. Simplifying four-strand flexor tendon repair using double-stranded suture: a comparative ex vivo study on tensile strength and bulking. J Hand Surg European Vol. 2011. June 2 (Epub ahead of print)*

*BMI Omar, **BTA Sara** Bacterial Hand Infections: An Analysis of Cases Presenting at the University Hospital, Kuala Lumpur. Med J Mal 51(1) 1996*

*T Ravindran, **T Sara**, YC Loh Endoscopic Carpal Tunnel Release – A Prospective Study of Functional Outcome Mal Ortho J 3(1) 2009*

Needless to say, Tunku Sara Ahmad, Ahmad TS and BTA Sara and T Sara are one and the same author.

Given Name and Surname

A “**given name**” is so-called Christian name, or forename in other religious conventions, and implies it is given by the parents. A surname is a name added to a given name and is part of a personal name. In many cases, a surname is a family name. A “**surname**” is often a synonym for “family name”. In some countries, it is commonly called “last name”.

In all Western countries in North and South America as well as Europe, a surname is placed at the end of a person's given name. One notable exception on the order is in Hungary, where, just like in China, Korea, Japan and in many other East Asian countries, the family name is placed before a person's given name. It is noteworthy that the Western style of having both a family name (surname) and a given name (Christian name or forename) is far from universal.

In many countries it is common for ordinary people to have only one name or mononym. The use of surname and given name is a European convention, and is the format required in many international documents, and extended to author names in publications. In the following example

Clare E Gilbert, S P Shah, M Z Jadoon, R Bourne, B Dineen, MA Khan, G J Johnson, M D Khan. Poverty and blindness in Pakistan: results from the Pakistan national blindness and visual impairment survey BMJ. 2008 January 5; 336(7634): 29–32,

the names Gilbert, Bourne and Johnson are surnames and the given names are in initials. “Khan” and “Shah” are Pakistani clan surnames and have been used in the same style as in the “European names”. Malaysian Muslims sometimes use the same format, like in:

Rosli MA, Robaayah Z, Tresukosol D, et al. Pacilitaxel-eluting Balloon Angioplasty and Cobalt-chromium Stents Versus Conventional Angioplasty and Pacilitaxel-eluting Stents in the treatment of Native Coronary Artery Stenoses in Patients with Diabetes Mellitus. EuroIntervention. 2011

In the above example, Robaayah is a given name and the “surname” Zambahari is indicated as “Z”. Similarly, Rosli is the given name and the surname, in this instance the father's name, is indicated by the initials MA.

Patronymic name conventions

This is simply a surname formed from a parent's name or from paternal ancestry, often referred to as the Kabalarian Philosophy¹. The Icelandic system, formerly used in much of

Scandinavia, does not use family names. A person's surname indicates the first name of the person's father (patronymic) or in some cases mother (matronymic). Most family names in other Scandinavian countries are a result of this naming practice, such as Hansen (son of Hans), Johansen (son of Johan) and Olsen (Son of Ole/Ola) the three most common surnames in Norway.

Patronymic name conventions are similar in some other nations, including Malaysia and other Muslim countries, in Mongolia and in the Scottish Gaelic personal naming system. In Russia and Bulgaria, both a patronym and a family name are obligatory parts of one's full name: e.g., if a Russian is called Ivan Andreyevich Sergeev, it would mean that his father's name is Andrey and his family name is Sergeev. A similar system is used in Greece. However, unlike the Icelandic case, only the family name is generally identified as a surname proper.

Use of Bin, Ben, Ibn (or Bint or Binti):

Arabic names are used in the Arab world, as well as some other Muslim regions. They are not necessarily of Arabic origin, though most in fact are². The nisbah: The Surname could be an everyday name, but is mostly the name of the ancestors' tribe, city, country, or any other term used to show relevance. It follows a family through several generations³.

In Hebrew, the name Ben means diminutive or the “son of”. Thus, Ben-jamin would mean “diminutive son of my right hand”. Many Jewish families name their youngest child Benjamin. The name Ben is most often used as a boy name or male name⁴.

The nasab is a patronymic or series of patronymics. It indicates the person's heritage by the word “ibn” (colloquially, bin) which means “son”, (bint or binti for “daughter”).

A recent very often mentioned name is that of Osama Ben Laden, which simply means Osama son of Laden. However, the Western world would refer to him as Ben Laden, which is generic *per se* and would not specifically refer to Osama. These names in the Muslim tradition indicate “son of” and are interposed between the given name and the father's name. Thus, Abdul Hamid **bin** Abdul Kadir would indicate that Abdul Hamid is the son of Abdul Kadir. The female offspring of Abdul Hamid is then written as Shafina binti Abdul Hamid. The name “Abdul Kadir” is **lost** with the male or female child, because it is not a surname, and genealogical search a few generations later becomes an arduous task. However, in the Arabic world, surnames, like Alsagoff, Alhabshi, or Imtiyaz and the off-springs would be Ibrahim Alsagoff or Fatimah Imtiyaz.

Muslim names also have two syllable given names, like Abdul Hamid which goes as one entity, similarly Mohamed

Hussein or Abu Hassan. When an author writes the name as Abdul Hamid Abdul Kadir, shortened to Abdul Hamid AK, when the name appears in a citation, it is at times broken to “A Hamid AK”. If *bin* is used then it comes out as HBAK Abdul, similar to Khalid bin Abdul Kadir being written as B A K Khalid.

One way to off-set this is to insert a hyphen, like Abdul-Hamid, to indicate that it is a “double barrel” single name, as in:

Abdul-Hamid AK “First dorsal interosseous compartment syndrome”. *J Hand Surg Br*. 1987 Jun;12(2):269-72.

similar to European surnames which have a double-barrel surname, as in:

D Maier-Katkin and R Ogle “A rationale for Infanticide Laws [1993] *Crim LR* 903.

Muslim authors seem undecided whether to use initial for patronym surname or given name, as in:

Human Plasmodium Knowlesi Infections in Klang Valley, Peninsula Malaysia: A Case Series C E Lee, **K Adeeba**, *G Freigang Med J Mal* 65 (1) 2010

Taking Stock of Two Decades of the Hiv/Aids Epidemic In Malaysia **A Kamarulzaman** Editorial *Med J Mal* 60(1) 2005

Generally, though Muslim authors have tended to have a mix of given name and “surname” as evident in the list of 6 authors below:

Non-Operative Treatment versus Steroid Injections in the Management of Unicameral Bone Cysts. *WI Faisham, AH Nawaz, AM Ezane, W Zulmi, S Ibrahim, AR Abdul Halim Mal Ortho J* 5(2) 2011

Chinese Names

Nearly always the family name (surname) is one-syllable long. The only common modern surnames that are two-syllables long are Ōuyáng (欧阳) and Sīmǎ (司马). Occasionally people have two surnames, usually written in English as two words: Wáng Xú.

Usually (but not always) the given name is two syllables long, and sometimes a group of siblings or even cousins will share the first (or sometimes second) syllable of their given names. Dèng Xiǎopíng, Dèng Liáopíng, and Dèng Guópíng, for example, would almost certainly be brothers or cousins⁵.

Very rarely, a Chinese surname may be double-barrel, like Khoo-Lim and the given name may be Thean Heng.

Common Chinese surnames, namely Ong, Lee, Wong, or **Chee**, with two other two syllable sub-names following the surname, which would be the “given name” **Yew Cheok**, as in the example below:

Chee Yew Cheok, Jamal Azmi Mohamad, Tunku Sara Ahmad. *Pain relief for reduction of acute anterior shoulder dislocations: A prospective randomized study comparing intravenous sedation with intra-articular lidocaine*. *J Orthop Trauma* 2011;25:5-10

Authors also place the surname following the other two given names in alphabets as in:

WL Loo, SYJ Loh, HC Lee. *Review of Proximal Nail Antirotation (PFNA) and PFNA-2 – Our Local Experience*

Some authors place a hyphen in the given name initials, like below:

Doppler spectrum analysis: A potentially useful diagnostic tool for planning the treatment of patients with Charcot arthropathy of the foot?
T. Wu, P-Y. Chen, C-H. Chen, and C-L. Wang *J Bone Joint Surg Br* March 2012 94-B:344-347.

The problem in these forms is that the initials, representing the given name, before the surname, may signify many given names.

For example,

P-Y may be Pui-Yee or Peh- Yit or Peng-Yow. So the initials in a Chinese name are non-specific.

A good alternative and to eliminate any confusion or ambiguity would be to write the “given name” in full with a hyphen followed by the surname as in the following examples:

Poh-Hong Yeoh, Say-Wan Lim or Ket-Keong Wong.

Many Chinese also have Christian names along with the surname, like Shirley Kee Pui May or Anthony Kang, and they would include these in their surnames, like PMS Kee, or as in the example below:

Christopher K C Lee *Influenza A (H1N1) 2009 Pandemic Virus: Learning from the First Wave, Preparing for the Second*. *Med J Mal* 65(1) 2010

Indian Names

There are 28 states and 22 official languages and 398 living languages in India. People from all these states are represented in Malaysia, bringing with them various ethnic characteristics in language, culture and, of course, names.

More commonly immigrants the Malaysian Indian's forefathers may have come from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Punjab, Gujarat or any of the other 28 states of India.

There are differences in the given name and surname or family typical of the state of origin of the forefathers. Among most people of the Indian state of Kerala ancestral origin village names have become surnames for the people. Generally, the clan/title/caste names (generally called surnames) come last.

In Malaysia, the general naming format for Indians is X son of Y or X daughter of Y. The term 'son of' is Anak Lelaki (abbreviated to A/L in documents) and the term 'daughter of' is Anak Perempuan (abbreviated to A/P). Some Indian Muslims also have A/L or A/P interposed between given name and father's name. It is good practice that A/L or A/P is not used by authors.

Malaysian Indian authors indicate their surname (father or family name) by a preceding initial and the given name in full:

B Kanthimathi, K Arun Kum. *Flexible Intramedullary Nailing for Paediatric Shaft of Femur Fractures – Does the Number of Nails Alter the Outcome Med J Mal 5(2) 2011*

S Jameela, S O Sharifah Sabirah, J Babam, C L Phan, P Visalachy, K M Chang, M A Salwana, A Zuraidah, Y Subramanian, A Rahimah Thalassaemia Screening among Students in A Secondary School in Ampang, Malaysia. Med J Mal 66(5) 2011

L Y Chan, S Balasubramaniam, R Sunder, R Jamalia, T V N Karunakar, J Alagaratnam. Tay-Sach Disease with "Cherry-Red Spot" - First Reported Case in Malaysia. Med J Mal 66(5)2011

Punjabi (Sikh) names

Singh is a common title, middle name, or surname used in South Asia, mainly in India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, originally used by Hindu Kshatriya warriors and kings. It is derived from the Sanskrit word *Siṃha* meaning "lion". It was later adopted into Sikhism in 1699 as per the instructions of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, and the use of Singh as a last name is mandatory for all baptized male Sikhs since 1699. Kaur is a name used by Sikh women either as the middle name, or as a last name.

Both male and female Sikh may have the same given name, and the gender is indicated after the name. For example it will be Amarjit Singh or Amarjit Kaur, followed by the surname. In full it may be Amarjit Singh Sidhu, shortened to AS Sidhu.

Some authors prefer to place the initial for Singh as "S" followed by the given name, as in:

Endoscopic Management of Sinonasal Inverted Papilloma S Bathma, S Harvinder, R Philip, S Rosalind, S Gurdeep Med J Mal 66(1) 2011

D N Pengiran Suhaili, B S Goh, B S Gendeh A Ten Year Retrospective Review of Orbital Complications Secondary to Acute Sinusitis in Children. Med J Mal 65 (1) 2010

"Singh" by itself with the given name as an initial is non-specific and in the following example, "B" may mean any Sikh given name beginning with that letter, like Balwant, Baljit, Bhupinder, etc.

B Singh, C Daneshvar. *Plasmodium knowlesi Malaria in Malaysia Med J Mal 65(3) 2010*

In the following example, most orthopedic surgeons may not know that the "M" stands in the above title for Manmohan. They would, however be familiar with the Singh Index for osteoporosis by the trabecular pattern in Ward's triangle in the proximal femur, which came to be introduced by way of the above article.

Singh M, Nagrath AR, Maini PS. *Changes in trabecular pattern of the upper end of the femur as an index of osteoporosis. J Bone Joint Surg Am. 1970 Apr; 52(3):457-67.*

Other Malaysian Names

In multi-ethnic Malaysia names are also derived from Portuguese (Sequerah) and Dutch or Ceylonese Burger (van Dort), as well as the various ethnic groups in Sabah (Mojuntin, Ongkili) and Sarawak (Iban, Chinese, Malay), Sinhalese (Silva), Jaffna (Jeyasingam), etc. The majority have surnames denoting their ancestral origin.

Korean Names

The most common Korean surname (particularly in South Korea) is Kim, followed by Lee and Park. Together, these three surnames are held by around half of the ethnic Korean population. So the initials for the given names may pose a problem in the search engines.

S. M. Kim, M. J. Park, H. J. Kang, Y. L. Choi, and J. J. Lee The role of arthroscopic synovectomy in patients with undifferentiated chronic monoarthritis of the wrist. J Bone Joint Surg Br March 2012 94-B:353-358.

Thai Names

The Thai people have family name, which are unique to a particular family, which tend to be long and which follow the given name, and this convention is adhered to quite systematically in all publications.

Saranatra Waikakul, Napon Sintuvanich, Tanyawan Assanasuwan, Krabkeow Soparat Efficacy, Side Effects, Safety and Effects on Bone Turnover Markers of once a Week Sandoz Alendronate Sodium Trihydrate 70 mg. Mal Ortho J 5(2) 2011

Filipino (Spanish) names

Brazilian and Western, and Filipino authors have no problem with surnames and given names, as they indicate the given names first with initials followed by the surname in full:

Radial Head Fractures: Mason Johnston's Classification Reproducibility RES Pires, FL Rezende, EC Mendes, AER Carvalho, IA Almeida Filho, FB Reis, MAP Andrade Mal Ortho J 5(2) 2011

Indonesian Names

Most Indonesian authors use their given names either in full or as initials.

Megaputera, H Suroto, D Roeshadi. Outcome of Closed and Open Reduction with Cross Pinning Fixation for Displaced Supracondylar Humeral Fracture. Mal Ortho J 4(1) 2010.

Occasionally, some authors will use their family name (like Siregar) after their given names.

PU Siregar. Bamboo Osteotomy for Blount's Disease. Malaysian Orthopaedic Journal Vol 4 No 1.

CONCLUSION

This analytical editorial is written to highlight and illustrate, with examples, the style, form and format generally adopted by Malaysian, regional and Western authors in scientific publications, and is not meant to be critical or cynical. Authors may choose any style of their preference, but it is worthwhile and indeed useful for any one author to adhere to a particular style or form throughout his or her writing and academic career for ease of search for purposes of citation or reference of a publication, whether in a journal or book.

REFERENCES

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