Competing interests declarations - the challenges

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• 400 + journals in medicine and health
• Subscription, hybrid and OA models
• International readership and authorship
• Online submission system
• Submissions handled by journal editorial office, Editors-in-Chief, etc
• Mandatory Declarations policies
Declarations – the challenges

- Terminology can cause confusion (e.g., “conflict of interest” vs “competing interests”)
- Non-financial/personal competing interests can be overlooked
- How clearly do journals state their policies?
- Policies and checking processes are not harmonized across journals
- Are reviewers made aware of author declarations?
- Are reviewer and editor declarations compiled?
- How are transparency of declarations handled in blinded peer review models (single, double, triple)
- Data – how should it be stored and for how long?
- Whose responsibility is it?

ICMJE: Conflict of interest guidance

Definitions.

Entity: government agency, foundation, commercial sponsor, academic institution, etc.

Grant: A grant from an entity, generally [but not always] paid to your organization

Personal Fees: Money paid to you for services rendered, generally honoraria, royalties, or fees for consulting, lectures, speakers bureaus, expert testimony, employment, or other affiliations

Non-Financial Support: Examples include drugs/equipment supplied by the entity, travel paid by the entity, writing assistance, administrative support, etc.

Other: Anything not covered under the previous three boxes

Pending: The patent has been filed but not issued

Issued: The patent has been issued by the agency

Licensed: The patent has been licensed to an entity, whether earning royalties or not

Royalties: Funds are coming in to you or your institution due to your patent

Declarations – addressing some of practicalities

• Refine messaging for authors and keep definitions consistent with ICMJE
• Ask all authors at point of submission and confirm at revision/acceptance
• Have processes in place to proactively address issues
• Engagement with Editors-in-Chief, editorial board members to ensure the policies are clear and easy to access
• Research integrity and ethics team is in place to help editorial teams to address issues, and is responsible for refining editorial policies.

http://icmje.org/conflicts-of-interest/
Questions

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