Attesting Authorship and Conflicts of Interest

A simple and effective way to activate co-authors

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An “Imperfect System”

• Federal Sunshine Act requires drug and medical device companies to track and report payments to U.S. physicians and teaching hospitals.
• When authors submit a manuscript they are responsible for disclosing all financial and personal relationships that might bias or be seen to bias their work.
• In 2018, NYT published several reports about prominent physicians who did not disclose conflicts in prestigious medical journals.
ASTRO’s Response

- Process audit
- Risk mitigation
  - Raise awareness – enhance prominence of Open Payments.gov
- Result
  - Enhanced verification process
"Trust the Process"

Slide:
- Submission received → Email to co-authors triggered → Co-authors asked to click link to verify authorship and COI disclosures
- Clicking the link confirms authorship and activates custom question
  - If yes: "I attest that the relevant disclosures have been reported on my form and on the manuscript’s title page; and that I have reviewed my disclosures against Open Payments."
  - If no: Open Payments info is omitted.

Reminders sent weekly to co-authors with outstanding verifications. Runs concurrently with peer review.

Implementation Data:
- # of requests
- # of reminders
- % complete
- Issue tracking
Co-author Verification Requests
1/22/19 – 4/16/19

ASTRO's Flagship Journal

Weekly Verification Reminders

Verification Reminder Counts Per Journal
Percentage of Completed Verifications

![Percentage of Completed Verifications Chart]

Issue Tracking

![Issue Tracking Chart]
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