



## **Policy for the Management of Conflicts of Interest for the Society of Interventional Radiology Clinical Practice Guidelines**

### **I. PURPOSE**

SIR aims to uphold the integrity of its Clinical Practice Guidelines by avoiding or actively managing conflicts of interest (COI), whether real or perceived, that could potentially influence the content of the guideline. The SIR COI policy aims to comply with standards and principles set forth in the National Academy of Medicine's (formerly IOM) report, "Clinical Practice Guidelines We can Trust" and the global Guidelines International Network for reviewing and managing COIs in order to ensure high confidence in SIR's guideline quality and integrity.<sup>1,2</sup>

### **II. REQUIREMENTS**

#### **A. Disclosure**

At the time of nomination to the panel, prior to the commencement of the guideline, all prospective panel chairs, co-chairs and panel members will be required to disclose professional or financial relationships with commercial entities that have a business interest or products in the content area of the guideline.

Prospective panelists must disclose the following relationships if held by them at the time they are invited to participate on the guideline panel or if held during the previous three years:

- a. Employment by a commercial entity
- b. Leadership positions
- c. Consultancies
- d. Advisory Boards
- e. Speaking engagements
- f. Lecture fees (honoraria)

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<sup>1</sup> Greenfield, Sheldon, et al. *Clinical Practice Guidelines We Can Trust*. Washington DC: Institute of Medicine, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Schunemann, Holger J, et al. "Guidelines International Network: Principles for Disclosure of Interests and Management of Conflicts in Guidelines." *Annals of Internal Medicine*. 2015; 163(7): 548-556.



- g. Research funding
- h. Stock ownership
- i. Royalties
- j. Ownership of intellectual property (including patents or patents pending)
- k. Paid expert testimony

If a potential COI arises during the course of the guideline development process, it must be disclosed to the guideline panel chair and SIR staff immediately. All panelists must agree to not take on any disqualifying relationships throughout the period of guideline development and for one year following print publication of the guideline.

#### **B. Review and Categorization of Conflicts of Interest**

The COI disclosures of prospective panelists will be reviewed by SIR staff and the Standards Division Councilor. Prospective panelists' COIs will be categorized as allowable, manageable, or disqualifying.

While disclosures are required over the previous three years, emphasis will be placed on the last year of COI.

#### **Allowable Conflicts of Interest:**

- a. Grant-funded research supported by government or non-profit organization that is free of direct or indirect industry funding
- b. Grant-funded research that is funded by a commercial entity with business interest/products in the content area of the guideline with funds directed to the panelists' institution
- c. Participation on a data and safety monitoring board
- d. Participation on scientific advisory committees/consultant (for study design, education, etc.) on matters that are *unrelated* to the guideline topic with companies that have a business interest/product lines in the content area of the guideline

**Manageable Conflicts of Interest:** Prospective panelists with manageable conflicts will be permitted to participate in panel discussions about the evidence, but must



recuse themselves from drafting, voting, or grading recommendations relevant to their conflict of interest.

- a. Grant-funded research that is funded by a commercial entity with business interests/products in the content area of the guideline with funds directed to the individual
- b. Research funding from a government program or non-profit organization that receives funding from a commercial entity with business interests/products in the content area of the guideline
- c. Participation on scientific advisory committees/consultant (for study design, education, etc.) on matters that are *related* to the guideline topic with companies that have a business interest/product lines in the content area of the guideline
- d. Non-promotional talks/faculty in a commercially sponsored nonaccredited activity in a content area related to the guideline (i.e. if the activity has industry financial support, all planning and content must be free of industry influence, and payment of expenses/honoraria must occur through a third party, such as the medical society or institution sponsoring the activity)

It is the responsibility of the guideline chair to ensure that panelists with manageable conflicts are recused as described above.

**Disqualifying Conflicts of Interest:** Having a relationship with a commercial entity does not necessarily mean an individual is biased or has a conflict of interest, however, certain financial relationships generate COI that are not capable of being effectively managed. These relationships include:

- a. Participation in a speakers' bureau in the past year on behalf of a commercial entity with business interests/products in the content area of the guideline
- b. Participation of scientific advisory board in the past year on behalf of a commercial entity with business interests/products in the content area of the guideline
- c. Employment by a relevant pharmaceutical or medical device company or a third party that has financial interests in guideline content
- d. Holding a significant ownership interest in commercial entity with business interests/products in the content area of the guideline
- e. Issuing statements and/or paid expert testimony on matters related to guideline content on behalf of a commercial entity



- f. A patent or other intellectual property that is relevant to the guideline's subject matter

Proposed panelists with disqualifying COI will be notified by SIR staff. Experts in the subject matter that have disqualifying COI may be permitted serve as a member of the guideline panel if the disqualifying relationship is terminated as far in advance of panel activity as possible. The panelist must also continue to refrain from any further disqualifying relationships throughout the period of guideline development and for one year following publication of the guideline.

Any disqualifying relationship that is terminated prior to the work of the guideline will be treated as a manageable conflict that requires appropriate management including recusal from decision-making (drafting, voting and grading) on recommendations related to that relationship.

### **III. GUIDELINE PANEL COMPOSITION**

The guideline panel chair and the majority (at least 51%) of the guideline panel must be free of conflicts of interest relevant to the subject matter of the guideline. This majority threshold is meant to be the minimal acceptable standard in accordance with the National Academy of Medicine. Guideline panels should strive to maintain as large a proportion of members free from relevant COI as possible while still maintain the necessary expertise to develop the guideline.

In some instances for specific topic areas, it may be difficult to identify a chair with the desired degree of expertise who is free of potential conflicts of interest. In these cases, that member may serve as chair provided that (1) the individual agrees to divest of all related relationships and activities and (2) a co-chair with no conflicts is identified to serve with that individual.

### **IV. PUBLICATION OF DISCLOSURE**

All relevant COI of the guideline panel members, including any management terms, will be published together with the SIR clinical practice guideline. The Methods section of the manuscript will describe in sufficient detail the process used to identify and manage COI during the course of the development process. Voting



results, including details regarding which panel members recused themselves due to COI, will also be published along with the guideline manuscript to ensure appropriate transparency.

## **V. COLLABORATION WITH OTHER SOCIETIES**

This policy may be modified for joint guideline development efforts with other organizations who conflict of interest policies may differ from that of SIR. In those cases, effort shall be made to uphold the standards detailed in this policy and set forth by the National Academy of Medicine and the Guidelines International Network. Prior to convening the guideline panel, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) must be developed and signed by the participating parties that explicitly describe the rules for managing conflicts of interest as agreed upon by the co-developing organizations.