



ENTITY	NUMBER
American Heart Association	
MANUAL	EFFECTIVE DATE
Policy and Procedure – Scientific Publishing	10/03
SUBJECT	REVISED
Disclosure – Conflict of Interest Procedures	10/2004; 5/2005; Reviewed 8/2009; Revised 03/2011, 04/2011, 10/2011, 11/2011, 02/2019, 05/2020

1 PURPOSE

In accordance with the American Heart Association’s (AHA) Relationship Disclosure and Conflict Resolution Policy (RDCRP), these procedures exist to provide guidance on the disclosure and management of conflict of interest (COI) for editors, authors, reviewers, and editorial staff involved in the submission, review, selection, and publication of articles in AHA scientific journals, both print and online, excluding American College of Cardiology (ACC)/AHA guidelines, AHA statements/advisories/guidelines, and any joint statements/guidelines that AHA may develop with non-ACC organizations.

2 DEFINITIONS

Role	Definition
Editor-in-Chief (EIC)	Complete responsibility for content of journal. Always a volunteer scientist.
Deputy Editor	Second in command to EIC. Assumes role of EIC, if EIC cannot perform job.
Associate Editor	Assists EIC in review and decision making of journal content. Appointed for areas of scientific expertise.
Consulting or Guest Editor	Serves as a surrogate to the EIC by handling papers that the EIC cannot because of a conflict. Independent decision-making authority for a manuscript, are not contracted as Associate Editors, and have no actual or perceived conflict of interest with manuscripts they are handling.
Editor	Generic term for Editor-in-Chief, Deputy Editor, Associate Editor, Assistant Editor, or Consulting or Guest Editor.
Collaborator	Any colleague, scientific mentor, or student with whom the Editor is currently conducting research or other significant professional activities.

3 REQUIREMENTS

3.1 All AHA journals shall use these procedures with regard to COI disclosure for authors, reviewers, editors, and editorial boards. The language pertaining to these requirements shall be the same across the journals in the appropriate written instructions, letters, online instructions, etc.

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All policies are available online at AHAjournals.org.

- 3.1.1 The AHA RDCRP is available here:
<https://www.heart.org/en/about-us/statements-and-policies/conflict-of-interest-policy>
- 3.1.2 The AHA Relationship Disclosure and Conflict Resolution Procedures document is available here:
<https://www.ahajournals.org/pb-assets/AHARelationshipDisclosureConflictResolutionProcedures.pdf>
- 3.2 **For Editors:**
 - 3.2.1 During the selection of an Editor or Editor-in-Chief, the AHA advises candidates that they must comply with AHA's RDCRP and Scientific Publishing procedures.
 - 3.2.2 Editor-in-Chief candidates are required to complete a Relationship Disclosure Questionnaire that will be reviewed by the Scientific Publishing Conflict of Interest Review Committee before being appointed and on an annual basis. By virtue of their positions, Editors-in-Chief must be especially sensitive to the issue of actual or perceived COI and must be especially rigorous in acting to avoid them.
 - 3.2.3 Editors are required to complete a Relationship Disclosure Questionnaire on an annual basis. During staff review of these forms, any declared conflicts of significance by Editors are brought to the attention of the Editor-in-Chief. Disclosures by Editors are retained by the AHA.
 - 3.2.4 To avoid actual or perceived COI:
 - 3.2.4.1 Original research manuscripts authored or coauthored by the Editor-in-Chief and/or any of the Associate Editors are handled by a Consulting Editor. The Consulting Editor makes all decisions about the manuscript, including choice of referees and ultimate acceptance or rejection. The entire process is handled confidentially.
 - 3.2.4.2 All manuscripts submitted from the Editor-in-Chief's home institution are also handled by a Consulting Editor.
 - 3.2.4.3 Manuscripts from an Associate Editor's institution can be handled by the Editor-in-Chief or another Associate Editor as long as those individuals are not from the same institution.
 - 3.2.4.4 Original research manuscripts authored or coauthored by a collaborator who has published with the Editor-in-Chief within 3 years at time of submission will be handled by a Consulting Editor.
 - 3.2.4.5 Original research manuscripts authored or coauthored by a collaborator who has published with an Associate Editor within

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3 years at time of submission cannot be handled by that Associate Editor.

3.2.4.6 Coauthors on government or society-initiated guidelines and scientific statements will not be, for the purpose of this procedure, considered collaborators.

3.2.4.7 The Editor-in-Chief may refer a manuscript to a Consulting Editor to avoid a real or reasonably perceived COI. In all such cases, the Consulting Editor shall make all decisions about the manuscript (including choice of referees and ultimate acceptance or rejection). The entire process is handled confidentially.

Example Scenarios:

A) Editor-in-Chief is from institution Alpha. Original research manuscript is submitted and one of the manuscript authors is from institution Alpha.

Manuscript should be handled by a Consulting Editor from a different institution. The Consulting Editor should make all decisions (see 3.3.4.7).

B) Editor-in-Chief was an author on an ACC/AHA guideline. A coauthor from that guideline submits an original research manuscript to the journal. The Editor-in-Chief and author have not jointly worked together on anything else in the past 3 years.

This is not considered a conflict for the purposes of this procedure, and the Editor-in-Chief can handle this manuscript (see 3.3.4.7).

C) A collaborator of an Associate Editor submits an original research manuscript to the journal. This author and the Associate Editor published a study together 2 years ago.

An Editor who is not a not collaborator with the author must handle this manuscript (see 3.3.4.7).

D) An Associate Editor is at institution Beta. An author from institution Beta submits an original research manuscript.

An Editor from a different institution must handle the manuscript (see 3.3.4.7).

E) An Editor-in-Chief or Associate Editor sits on a project steering committee. A project collaborator who has not published with the Editor-in-Chief or Associate Editor submits a manuscript related to the project steering committee or the topic of the committee.

A nonconflicted Editor must handle the manuscript (see 3.3.4.7).

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3.3 For Authors:

3.3.1 An Authorship Responsibility and Copyright Transfer Agreement form or Open Access license agreement must be completed by **all authors**. All authors must also complete and sign the COI Disclosure Questionnaire. The AHA has adopted the International Committee on Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) Conflict of Interest disclosure form for authors (Appendix). Each author is required to complete the ICMJE COI form.

If an author has no conflicts to declare, they must indicate **None**.

3.3.2 Additionally, authors **must** disclose all financial and nonfinancial relationships that could be perceived as actual or perceived COIs. COI disclosures will be published in the Disclosures section, which appears after the Acknowledgments section, in the accepted article.

3.3.3 The Acknowledgments section in the accepted article recognizes the substantive contributions of individuals:

3.3.3.1 Authors **must** provide written permission/approval from all individuals mentioned by name in the Acknowledgments section of the manuscript.

3.3.3.2 Authors **must** completely spell out all grant funding agency abbreviations, with the exception of the National Institutes of Health.

3.3.4 The Sources of Funding section in the accepted article recognizes all sources of research support (including commercial or institutional support).

3.4 For Reviewers:

3.4.1 AHA journals shall require a COI disclosure from potential reviewers of any manuscripts. This requirement will be incorporated into the language and procedures of the online manuscript submission and peer review system used by all of the journals. As well, a link to the full details of the AHA policies and standards will be available from the online manuscript submission and peer review system. A standard statement is as follows:

3.4.1.1 Please advise the editorial office in your reply of any relevant relationship that might be reasonably perceived as a real or potential conflict of interest that could potentially influence or bias your review of this manuscript. While most relationships are not disqualifying, if you believe that you have a disqualifying conflict of interest, financial or otherwise, including a recent collaboration with the authors (within the past 3 years), please contact the editorial office immediately. A relationship is “relevant” if the relationship or interest relates to the topic of the manuscript in terms of any of the following: the same or similar subject matter or topic; the same, similar or competing drug or device, product or service, intellectual property or asset; a drug or device company or its competitor; or has the reasonable potential to result in financial, professional or other personal gain or loss for you, members of your household or employer.

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- 3.4.1.2 A recent collaboration that needs to be disclosed is defined as coauthoring a manuscript or any other professional relationship (eg, served as a mentor or joint grant holders) with the authors of the present manuscript within the previous 3 years at the time of submission.

APPROVALS:

SPC COI Subcommittee: 10/03

Scientific Publishing Committee: 10/03, 11/11, 02/2019, 05/2020

Appendix: International Committee on Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form for Authors

Authors Conflict of Interest Disclosure Questionnaire



Journal	<i>Circulation Research - TEST</i>	Manuscript #	CIRCRESTEST/2019/314924
Date	April 1, 2019 18:38 GMT	IP Address	161.69.122.10
Title	Testing Technical Review Comments to Author		
Authors	David Tester		

Instructions for Authors Conflict of Interest Disclosure

The purpose of this form is to provide readers of your manuscript with information about your other interests that could influence how they receive and understand your work. The form includes the questions from the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) Form for Disclosure of Potential Conflicts of Interest and is divided into 6 subsections. Each author should submit a separate form and is responsible for the accuracy and completeness of the submitted information.

Authors are expected to provide detailed information about all relevant financial interests, activities, relationships, and affiliations (other than those affiliations listed in the title page of the manuscript) including, but not limited to, employment, affiliation, funding and grants received or pending, consultancies, honoraria or payment, speakers bureaus, stock ownership or options, expert testimony, royalties, donation of medical equipment, or patents and copyrights planned, pending, or issued.

1. Identifying information.

2. The work under consideration for publication.

This section asks for information about the work that you have submitted for publication. The time frame for this reporting is that of the work itself, from the initial conception and planning to the present. The requested information is about resources that you received, either directly or indirectly (via your institution), to enable you to complete the work. Checking "No" means that you did the work without receiving any financial support from any third party -- that is, the work was supported by funds from the same institution that pays your salary and that institution did not receive third-party funds with which to pay you. If you or your institution received funds from a third party to support the work, such as a government granting agency, charitable foundation or commercial sponsor, check "Yes".

3. Relevant financial activities outside the submitted work.

This section asks about your financial relationships with entities in the bio medical arena that could be perceived to influence, or that give the appearance of potentially influencing, what you wrote in the submitted work. You should disclose interactions with ANY entity that could be considered broadly relevant to the work. For example, if your article is about testing an epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR) antagonist in lung cancer, you should report all associations with entities pursuing diagnostic or therapeutic strategies in cancer in general, not just in the area of EGFR or lung cancer. Report all sources of revenue paid (or promised to be paid) directly to you or your institution on your behalf over the 36 months prior to submission of the work. This should include all monies from sources with relevance to the submitted work, not just monies from the entity that sponsored the research. Please note that your interactions with the work's sponsor that are outside the submitted work should also be listed here. If there is any question, it is usually better to disclose a relationship than not to do so. For grants you have received for work outside the submitted work, you should disclose support ONLY from entities that could be perceived to be affected financially by the published work, such as drug companies, or foundations supported by entities that could be perceived to have a financial stake in the outcome. Public funding sources, such as government agencies, charitable foundations or academic institutions, need not be disclosed. For example, if a government agency sponsored a study in which you have been involved and drugs were provided by a pharmaceutical company, you need only list the pharmaceutical company.

4. Intellectual property.

This section asks about patents and copyrights, whether pending, issued, licensed and/or receiving royalties.

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5. Relationships not covered above.

Use this section to report other relationships or activities that readers could perceive to have influenced, or that give the appearance of potentially influencing, what you wrote in the submitted work.

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: Monies 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 3 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

Section 1. Identifying Information

Corresponding Author: David Tester

Date: April 1, 2019

Are you the corresponding author? Yes

Manuscript Title: Testing Technical Review Comments to Author

Manuscript Identifying Number: CIRCRESTEST/2019/314924

Section 2. The Work Under Consideration for Publication

Did you or your institution **at any time** receive payment or services from a third party (government, commercial, private foundation, etc) for any aspect of the submitted work (including but not limited to grants, data monitoring board, study design, manuscript preparation, statistical analysis, etc)?

Are there any relevant conflicts of interest? Yes No

If yes, please fill out the appropriate information below. If you have more than 1 entity, press the "Add" button to add a row. Excess rows can be removed by pressing the "Remove" button.

Name of Institution/Company	Grant?	Personal Fees?	Non-Financial Support?	Other?	Comments	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Remove Add

Section 3. Relevant Financial Activities Outside the Submitted Work

Place a check in the appropriate boxes in the table to indicate whether you have financial relationships (regardless of amount of compensation) with entities as described in the instructions. Use 1 line for each entity; add as many lines as you need by clicking the "Add" button to add a row. Excess rows can be removed by pressing the "Remove" button. You should report relationships that were **present during the 36 months prior to submission.**

Are there any relevant conflicts of interest? Yes No

If yes, please fill out the appropriate information below.

Name of Entity	Grant?	Personal Fees?	Non-Financial Support?	Other?	Comments	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Remove Add

Section 4. Intellectual Property -- Patents & Copyrights

Do you have any patents or copyrights, whether planned, pending, or issued, broadly relevant to the work?

Are there any relevant conflicts of interest? Yes No

If yes, please fill out the appropriate information below. If you have more than 1 entity, press the "Add" button to add a row. Excess rows can be removed by pressing the "Remove" button.

Patent/Copyright?	Pending?	Issued?	Licensed?	Royalties?	Licensee?	Comments	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			Remove

Patent/Copyright?	Pending?	Issued?	Licensed?	Royalties?	Licensee?	Comments	Add
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Section 5. Relationships Not Covered Above

Are there other relationships or activities that readers could perceive to have influenced, or that give the appearance of potentially influencing, what you wrote in the submitted work?

- Yes, the following relationships/conditions/circumstances are present (explain below):
- No other relationships/conditions/circumstances that present a potential conflict of interest

At the time of manuscript acceptance, the journal will ask authors to confirm and, if necessary, update their disclosure statements. On occasion, the journal may ask authors to disclose further information about reported relationships.

Section 6. Disclosure Statement

Based on the above disclosures, this form will automatically generate a disclosure statement in the box below after you click the "Generate Disclosure Statement" button. Any subsequent changes will also update the disclosure statement automatically after clicking the "Submit" button.

Generate Disclosure Statement

By completing this form, I confirm that the information reported is accurate. I understand that, where appropriate, this information may be disclosed publicly. I further understand that the American Heart Association, Inc., reserves the right to decline to publish my work if the Organization believes a significant conflict of interest exists.

David Tester

- Checking this box acts as your signature for the Authors Conflict of Interest Disclosure Questionnaire.

April 1, 2019 18:38 GMT

I Agree