

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR LABORATORY HEMATOLOGY

Conflict of Interest Policy

January 2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The International Society for Laboratory Hematology (ISLH) is dedicated to advancing the specialty of laboratory hematology. To accomplish this mission, ISLH provides support for a variety of activities in the areas of research, education, and training including the journal that we support, the *International Journal of Laboratory Hematology*. The integrity of ISLH and the activities it undertakes depends on the avoidance of conflicts of interest, or even the appearance of conflicts, by the individuals involved with those activities.

ISLH has adopted the principles below that underscore its commitment to managing real/perceived conflicts of interest, as well as policies that lay out specific ways in which the Society safeguards the integrity of the programs and activities in which its membership is engaged. This document constitutes the "ISLH Conflict of Interest Policy."

I. Principles

Principle 1: The integrity of ISLH and the scientific and educational activities it undertakes depend on the avoidance of bias arising from conflicts of interest, or from the appearance of such conflicts, by the individuals involved with those activities. Personal financial considerations must never be allowed to cloud physicians' and scientists' decisions on the care of patients (including their laboratory tests and investigations), safety of drugs or devices, or proper conduct of biomedical research. Continuing medical education (CME) and continuing education (CE) provided by ISLH must be free of bias devolving from financial arrangements or considerations.

Principle 2: A conflict of interest exists when an individual has material interests outside of ISLH that could influence or could be perceived as influencing his/her decisions, actions, or presentations. These interests, which include employment, consultancy, equity, research funding, honoraria, patents and royalties, speakers bureau involvement, advisory committee or board of directors membership, expert testimony, and financial support from a commercial entity for the costs of travel to the ISLH annual meeting, are relevant if they occurred in the past 12 months for the volunteer, partner, or spouse. Conflicts of commercial interest may involve either an agent or device as the subject in question or an agent or device that might be in competition with the subject in question.

ISLH recognizes that there are varying degrees of conflict. All potential conflicts must be disclosed so that the audience or committee can evaluate the relevancy of the conflict.

Principle 3: The atmosphere ISLH desires is one where people are comfortable asking questions relating to conflict of interest without feeling awkward or accusatorial and where recusing one's self from participation in discussions that might be perceived as constituting a conflict is the norm rather than the exception.

Principle 4: Having a member of ISLH with a conflict of interest does not necessarily preclude participation in ISLH activities. In fact, such external relationships may enhance the value of that member to the Society.

Principle 5: ISLH subscribes to the view that research and development sponsored by the biomedical industry play an important role in biomedical research and that academic-industrial relationships have developed useful and life-saving products.

Principle 6: The mission of ISLH does not include marketing of pharmaceutical or biomedical products, such as laboratory assays or equipment. While opportunities do exist for purchase of space for commercial displays at the ISLH annual meeting and while certain ISLH publications sell advertising pages, the revenues generated are devoted to the support of the Society's mission.

Principle 7: The ISLH policies are congruent with the positions of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) that state: (a) commercial support for CME must be acknowledged, and (b) attendees be encouraged to report on their perceptions of any possible bias.

Principle 8: The considerations of conflict of interest are relevant not only to clinical research but may extend to all phases of biomedical research, including pre-clinical research and research on diagnostic test use and assessment. In such research, financial conflicts of interest are particularly apt to lead to bias if the work is "reasonably anticipated; (a) to be a component of an Investigational New Drug (IND), device, technology or test application submission or (b) to progress to research involving human subjects within the coming 12 months."

II. Policies

The requirements of ISLH apply to all persons who:

1. Are employees, advisors and consultants of ISLH;
2. Seek to make presentations at any ISLH meeting or to submit material for any ISLH publication; or
3. Serve on the Executive Committee or other committees, or otherwise serve in an official service capacity on behalf of the Society.

Policy 1: Some individuals serve as expert witnesses, officers, directors, or members of scientific advisory boards of companies, participate in company-sponsored speakers' bureaus, or accept subsidies from a commercial entity for the costs of travel to the ISLH annual meeting. All of these activities represent conflicts of interest. Examples of conflicts of interest include the following:

Personal financial interests: Stocks, company shares, expert testimony; consultant fees, advisory arrangements, or other remuneration from companies that may gain or lose financially through publication.

Funding: Research support from organizations that might gain or lose financially through publication of the paper.

Employment or leadership position: Recent, present or anticipated employment or leadership position by an individual or a family member by any organization that may gain or lose financially through publication of the paper.

Patent rights: Current patents or pending patent applications

Policy 2: ISLH holds its members serving in governance positions to certain standards with regard to conflict of interest. Specifically, when an ISLH member has a conflict, s/he will not:

1. Take any action on behalf of ISLH concerning the subject in conflict or any issue relevant to the subject in conflict;
2. Participate in discussions on the subject without full disclosure;
3. Participate in decision-making discussions or cast a vote;
4. Imply that he/she is acting on behalf of ISLH when discussing the relevant subject with third parties;
5. Fail to clarify with third parties with whom he/she deals on the relevant subject that he/she is not acting on behalf of ISLH; or
6. Share confidential information, including disclosure of embargoed abstract data which would break laws relating to insider trading.

Policy 3: ISLH has the right to take action regarding individuals who have exhibited biased behavior or action. These actions may include:

1. Requiring an individual to choose between the competing activities.
2. Prohibiting an individual from playing a decision-making role in ISLH relevant to the conflict.
3. Prohibiting an individual from presenting at ISLH-sponsored events.
4. Exclusion from publishing in the *International Journal of Laboratory Hematology* or other ISLH publications.
5. Exclusion from participating in ISLH committees.
6. Revocation of membership in ISLH.

Policy 4: No donor, commercial or otherwise, can select speakers or awardees or be involved in the production of educational and/or scientific content.

Policy 5: Commercial support for CME must be acknowledged. Meeting attendees are provided with a formal opportunity to report on their perceptions of any possible bias in their review of the sessions for CME credit.

Policy 6: ISLH considers certain clearly defined types of academic consulting and fees exempt from its definition of reportable financial interests, e.g., fees received for serving on grant application review groups (study sections) and fees given as honoraria by another academic institution for an academic activity, such as seminars and grand rounds.

Policy 7: ISLH sponsors the development of evidence-based guidelines. Policies intended to prevent bias from conflicts of interest apply to participants in ISLH guideline development.

III. Process

Education/Awareness

ISLH takes seriously its commitment to preserving the scientific integrity of its programs through transparency and proper management of conflicts of interest. In an effort to ensure that sensitivity to potential conflicts is intrinsic to the Society's culture, the following measures will be implemented:

- The Nominating Committee Chair contacts potential leadership election candidates (for Officer, Board Member or Councillor) to determine any conflicts of interest; agreement to resolve such conflicts and comply with all aspects of the ASH Conflict of Interest

Policy relevant to individuals in governance positions is a prerequisite for inclusion on the election ballot.

- A new member orientation packet is given to incoming Executive Committee members, Board members, Councilors, Scientific Committee Chairs and Vice chairs, Editors-in-chiefs, which includes the ISLH Conflict of Interest Policy .
- Every committee meeting begins with a review of the ISLH Conflict of Interest Policy and processes for managing conflicts during meetings.
- Any meeting speaker who declares a conflict is provided with a reminder about the ISLH Conflict of Interest Policy and a copy of the ACCME Standards for Commercial Support prior to his/her presentation.

Meeting Program Design

As an ACCME-accredited provider of CME, ISLH fully complies with the ACCME guidelines regarding educational program design and evaluation, as well as the ACCME Standards for Commercial Support, ensuring that the program design, implementation, and evaluation processes are free from commercial influence.

- Each individual in a position to determine the content of an educational activity must disclose all relevant financial relationships that involve the receipt of wages, compensation or other remuneration for their services as an employee or consultant with any commercial interest and follow the Society's policy for managing conflicts.
- The terms, conditions, and purposes of any commercial support of the CME program are documented in a written letter of agreement between ISLH and the commercial supporter. The agreement states that ISLH, not the commercial supporter, makes all decisions regarding the educational content of the program, selection of speakers, and disbursement of commercial support.
- Under no circumstances may honoraria be paid directly to speakers/faculty by commercial supporters.
- Acknowledgment of corporate support is provided on the ISLH website, in the printed meeting materials, and on signage on-site.
- Product promotion and product-specific advertisement of any type are prohibited in or during CME activities.
- Corporate-sponsored symposia must adhere to ACCME standards for commercial support.

Administration/Disclosure of Conflicts

To facilitate the collection of information about potential conflicts, ISLH utilizes a standardized form in which participants in ISLH committees, publications, and programs enter or update

information about their relevant disclosures. This is maintained in a centralized online ISLH site, available for review by individuals as needed.

For publications and CME activities, relevant disclosure information is provided to the audience in conjunction with each activity.

Specifically:

- For all ISLH meetings, invited speaker disclosure information is provided on a slide shown during the presentation, and in the written meeting materials. Poster presentations contain a disclosure statement on the poster itself.
- In ISLH publications, author disclosures are provided as part of each article or chapter and editor disclosures are provided in a prominent location. This is monitored by the editors-in-chief for the *International Journal of Laboratory Hematology*.
- By their nature, guidelines are typically developed by multiple individuals from a single or several organizations. When the nature of an organization is guideline development, then that organization must declare all sources of funding. All authors must disclose competing interests, or state 'none.' All sources of funding must be disclosed. Governmental, industrial, charitable, and/or personal sources of funding used for the studies must be listed.

For committee meetings, it is critical for participants to be aware of conflicts so decisions can be made without bias. Per ISLH policy, when a subject comes up that presents a potential conflict, the member must state the conflict, refrain from participating in decision-making or voting on that particular issue by leaving the room. To help ensure that the policy is followed:

- Prior to each committee meeting, the Committee Chair receives a report of the declared conflicts for each committee member so that he/she can facilitate the proper management of conflicts.
- Disclosures for the ISLH Officers, Board of Directors, Councilors, and Editors-in-Chief are [110] available by request.
- The annual meeting abstracts are selected through a blinded review process, and staff members monitor each conference call to ensure that proper procedures are followed.

Enforcement

A number of efforts are put in place to ensure compliance with the ISLH Conflict of Interest Policy and address any violations.

- Staff members ensure there is a disclosure slide for each presentation and poster.
- Session chairs are provided with disclosure information for each of the speakers in their sessions.
- Committee volunteers who fulfill CME organization's requirements formally review speaker presentations for any bias or the appearance thereof.
- In the event that ISLH receives a report of speaker bias or failure to disclose, a report is presented to the Executive Committee, which determines consequent action on a case-by-case basis. Such action may range from a written warning to the speaker about adherence to the ISLH COI policy to prohibition from participation in future ISLH events.

Questions and comments regarding the ISLH conflict of interest principles and policies can be directed to the ISLH Vice-President of Scientific Communications.

ISLH Conflict of Interest form

- A conflict of interest exists when an individual has relationships outside of ISLH that could influence or could be perceived as influencing his/her decisions, actions, or presentations.
- Participants in ISLH committees, publications, and programs must disclose all financial relationships that occurred in the past 12 months for the volunteer, partner, or spouse, including employment, consultancy, equity, research funding, honoraria, patents and royalties, speakers bureau involvement, advisory committee or board of directors membership, expert testimony, and financial support from a commercial entity for the costs of travel.
- ISLH will evaluate all disclosed relationships in the context of each ISLH activity in which the individual participates, determine which relationships pose a potential conflict of interest, and determine how any potential conflicts will be managed.

Name:

Date:

ISLH position:

- Officer
- Board member
- Councilor
- Committee chair
- Committee member
- Author
- Other: _____

Relationship:

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- Research funding
 - Honoraria
 - Speakers Bureau
 - Equity Ownership
 - Patents & Royalties
 - Membership on a Board or Advisory Committee
 - Other: _____