

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST GUIDELINES: JOURNALS OF THE
AMERICAN COLLEGE OF RHEUMATOLOGY
(*Arthritis & Rheumatology, Arthritis Care & Research,*
and *ACR Open Rheumatology*)**

**Implemented July 12, 1995 and revised April 2003, May 2007, September 2009, May 2011,
February 2014, March 2018**

A. AUTHORS

1. At the time of initial submission, manuscripts must include a paragraph on the first page of the manuscript itself, stating all financial support for the study and summarizing significant pertinent financial relationships of all authors.
2. At the time of revision, the corresponding author must obtain and enter Disclosure of Interest information into ScholarOne for each author. The following information must be disclosed: financial support and consulting activities in the past 2 years that might be interpreted as constituting an actual or possible conflict of interest for the described studies for the author, any member of his/her immediate family, or any other individual or entity with whom the author has a significant relationship, including:
 - a) ownership or control of stock in a company developing, manufacturing, or distributing a product studied or discussed in the manuscript, or a competing product.
 - b) service as a consultant or advisor to a company developing, manufacturing, or distributing a product studied or discussed in the manuscript, or a competing product.
 - c) any current or pending patent/license/royalty arrangements relating to any product studied or discussed in the manuscript, or a competing product.
 - d) any other possible financial benefit, such as derived income from a diagnostic test or product described or discussed in the manuscript or a competing product, legal work as an expert witness or consultant in cases related to a product studied or discussed in the manuscript or a competing product, or work as a consultant to an investment company regarding a product studied or discussed in the manuscript or a competing product.

If an author is unsure whether a specific relationship falls into the criteria for disclosure, he/she should err on the side of disclosing. Authors are advised to disclose conflicts that

have any potential relevance to the content of the manuscript they are submitting for consideration by the journal.

3. At the time of revision, the corresponding author must indicate the role that each author played in the project giving rise to the manuscript and attest to the fact that all authors have participated sufficiently in the project to meet the criteria for authorship and to take public responsibility for the work done.
4. The reported disclosure of interest information and author contribution information will be published with the manuscript.

B. REVIEWERS

1. All potential reviewers will be asked in the initial contact to state that they agree to review the manuscript and that they have no financial, personal, or intellectual conflict of interest that would interfere with performing an unbiased review. The letter inviting the individual to be a reviewer will include an explanation of areas of possible conflict for the reviewer's consideration, including clauses A2a-d and the following:
 - e) previous (over the past 2 years) or current close collaborative relationship with any of the authors, or if the potential reviewer is from the same institution as any of the authors.
 - f) any other reason the individual feels his/her review may be biased, e.g., an intellectual conflict such as research competitor.

If a potential reviewer has questions about what might constitute a possible conflict of interest, he/she should contact the Editor. The Editor will make the determination as to whether the individual has a conflict that could affect his/her ability to objectively review the manuscript based on the information provided.

C. EDITOR

1. Using the American College of Rheumatology Confidential Disclosure Statement form (as used for members of the Board of Directors and committees), the Editor will file annual disclosures as follows. The Editor will send copies of his/her disclosure form, and a letter stating what restrictions the Editor will impose on his/her involvement in the journal as a result of any past or present activities that might be perceived as constituting a conflict of

interest, to the Chair of the Committee on Journal Publications. The Editor will send a copy of the form and letter to the journal office at the American College of Rheumatology, where it will be kept on file. This disclosure form and letter will be sent at the beginning of the Editor's term and updated annually on July 1. Upon receipt of the disclosure form and letter from the Editor, the Chair of the Committee on Journal Publications and the Managing Editor will review both documents for adequacy and to determine if any additional steps need to be taken by the Editor to address activities that may pose a conflict or be perceived as constituting a conflict. Should the Editor disagree with their recommendations, the matter will be referred to the full Committee on Journal Publications for final resolution.

2. Annually, within 30 days after review of the disclosure information from the Deputy, Co-, and Associate Editors (see D below), the Editor will write a letter to the Chair of the Committee on Journal Publications regarding what specific responsibilities each Deputy, Co-, or Associate Editor will be excused from, i.e., specific topics in which they will not be involved in the review or decision process, or any other restrictions that are deemed appropriate.
3. The Editor will consult the Chair of the Committee on Journal Publications regarding any specific questions or problems that may arise regarding disclosure or conflict of interest issues.
4. The Editor will not engage in any legal work as an expert witness or consultant during his/her term, nor will he/she write any editorials or commentaries on specific topics where he/she has been involved in work as an expert witness or consultant during the 5 years preceding the term as Editor. An exception to the prohibition against the Editor's serving as an expert witness may be made if the Editor is required to testify on an uncompensated basis on behalf of the institution at which he/she is employed, in his/her capacity as an employee of the institution, and not as journal Editor.
5. The Editor may not have any direct financial relationship with commercial entities during his/her term of service. The Editor may provide uncompensated service to commercial entities and accept reasonable travel reimbursement in connection with those services. The Editor may accept grant support from commercial entities, as long as the grant monies are paid to the institution where research is conducted, not directly to the Editor. Research

support and/or uncompensated services should be disclosed and updated annually in writing to the Committee of Journal Publications, and such disclosure should be publicly available.

6. All unsolicited manuscripts submitted from the institution of the Editor will be handled outside the normal review process, e.g., forwarded to the immediate past Editor of the individual's journal or to the current Editor of one of the other ACR journals for a complete review and decision process.

D. DEPUTY, CO-, AND ASSOCIATE EDITORS

1. The following policies are intended to ensure that all manuscripts receive an unbiased judgment concerning publication and that the Deputy, Co-, and Associate Editors do not engage in activities that would compromise or have the appearance of compromising their abilities to exercise this judgment.
2. The Deputy, Co-, or Associate Editor will not review, assign reviewers, or make decisions on a manuscript where a potential conflict of interest may exist, such as defined in clauses A2a-d and B1e-f.
3. Using the American College of Rheumatology Confidential Disclosure Statement form (as used for members of the Board of Directors and committees), the Deputy, Co-, and Associate Editors will file disclosures in the Editor's office, which will be kept confidential, regarding all financial arrangements with any company, either as owners of stock, consultants, advisors, or recipients of royalties, or any legal work as an expert witness or consultant over the past 5 years. These disclosures will be filed at the beginning of each Deputy, Co-, and Associate Editor's term and updated annually on July 1. The Editor will use this information to make decisions regarding assignments of tasks to the Deputy, Co-, and Associate Editors.
4. During their 5-year term, the Deputy, Co-, or Associate Editors will not engage in any legal work as expert witnesses or consultants on a specific topic where they have written editorials, commentaries, or reviews during their term as Deputy or Associate Editor, nor will they write any such articles for any ACR journal during their term if they have testified as an expert witness or consultant on that topic during their term.

5. All unsolicited manuscripts submitted from the institutions of the Deputy Editors, Co-Editors, and Associate Editors will be handled outside the normal review process, e.g., forwarded to the Editor or to a Deputy, Co-, or Associate Editor not from the same institution, for a complete review and decision process.