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Journal of Clinical Periodontology

Editorial

# Integrity of research findings: transparency and disclosure of potential conflict as best practice

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Advances in biomedical research are the result of a complex inter-dependent relationship between individual investigators, academic institutions, funding agencies and industry.

This relationship has been largely positive and has allowed quantum increments in scientific knowledge and undeniable progress in clinical practice. We all are grateful for the opportunities that this has offered to our patients and to the population as a whole: thanks to this virtuous interaction, evidence based practice of Periodontology is a clinical reality.

Recently, both the consumers (the public and clinicians) and the producers (the investigators) of research findings have identified the dangers of grey areas arising from the potential conflict of interests – personal career, financial wellbeing of the institution, commercial interests – competing with the primary objective of generating useful knowledge for patient care.

Universities around the world have taken vigorous steps to ensure that potential conflicts of interest do not arise, are appropriately managed and thus that the integrity of research findings is ensured. These are common knowledge among investigators and the more progressive component of industry who are genuinely interested in finding out what is best for the patient and the population. Indeed only robust evidence of efficacy and effectiveness can be the basis of a solid business model for industry and the profession.

As our profession moves more and more into evidence based clinical decision making it is clear that our process will be as robust and credible as the underlying evidence.

Upon solicitation from the Editor, the European Federation of Periodontology general assembly has unanimously mandated the *Journal of Clinical Periodontology* to establish appropriate best practices to contribute to transparent reporting of the research findings published in our journal.

The objective of these measures is to increase the level of transparency of the role that each party has played in the generation, interpretation and reporting of new knowledge and hopefully further enhance the confidence that the scientific community and the profession have on the high-quality research published in our journal.

To achieve this goal in full respect of the role of the other components of the knowledge generation and dissemination cycle – investigators, academic institutions and industry – the journal will require disclosure of funding source and potential conflict of interest for all articles submitted to the journal effective immediately.

Two statements will be added to all new articles. A statement of funding will list all sources of funding for the specific research project and in case of commercial funding authors are encouraged to indicate if the study protocol was prepared by industry or was investigator initiated. A conflict of interest statement shall disclose potential conflict of interest of any member of the investigational team that may be perceived as significant by a third party (see http://www.icmje.org/#conflicts for generally accepted definitions).

More transparency, more confidence: the journal counts on your help.

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