

## **Declarations of Funding and Competing Interest for *Nicotine & Tobacco Research***

The science of nicotine and tobacco research, as does all science, needs to be beyond reproach. The presence of undeclared sources of support and financial interests has the possibility of undermining the credibility of published work regardless of whether the financial factors emanate from tobacco or non-tobacco industries. The issue of credibility is especially salient in the charged political environment in which this work is published.

The need for authors of papers submitted for peer review in biomedical science journals to declare potential sources of financial conflict of interest is being endorsed to an increasing extent. Much has been written recently about the definition of conflict of interest, ways to assess it, and methods of reporting it. The revised "Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals: Writing and Editing for Biomedical Publication," a document developed by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, provides us with a basis for editorial policy:

Conflict of Interest exists when an author (or the author's institution), reviewer, or editor has financial or personal relationships with other persons or organizations that inappropriately influence (bias) his or her actions. The existence of such relationships does not necessarily represent true conflict of interest. The potential for conflict of interest can exist whether or not an individual believes that the relationship affects his or her scientific judgment. Financial relationships (such as employment, consultancies, stock ownership, honoraria, paid expert testimony, patents) are the most easily identifiable conflicts of interest and the most likely to undermine the credibility of the journal, the authors, and of science itself.

The revised guidelines continue:

All participants in the peer review and publication process must disclose all relationships that could be viewed as presenting a potential conflict of interest. Disclosure of these relationships is particularly important in connection with editorials and review articles, because bias can be more difficult to detect in those publications than in reports of original research. Editors should publish this information if they believe it will be important to readers in judging the manuscript.

Most recently, some journals are asking authors of original empirical papers to also declare that they have had full access to all of the data in the study and take responsibility for the integrity of the data and the accuracy of the data analysis. This latter requirement appears to be especially important for industry-sponsored research studies in which the author is not an employee of the sponsoring company.

*Nicotine & Tobacco Research* has adopted the following additional procedural steps concerning the issue of potential conflict of interest:

**Authors** of Original Investigations, Brief Reports, Reviews, Letters, and Commentaries must include a Funding section specifying sources of funding for all authors for the work represented in the manuscript. In addition to disclosure of direct financial support, all authors must disclose any competing interests in a Competing Interests section.

At the point of manuscript submission, authors must indicate whether or not the text was reviewed by the sponsor prior to submission, i.e., whether the study was written with full investigator access to all relevant data and whether the sponsor exerted editorial influence over the written text. Authors also must confirm that the manuscript is not under review—and will not be under review—by another publication while it is being considered by *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*.

**Editors and reviewers** of papers submitted to *Nicotine & Tobacco Research* should declare potential competing interests. Reviewers should decline to review any manuscripts for which they have a real or perceived competing interest.

In the event that a previously undisclosed funding source or potential competing interest for an author of a published paper comes to the attention of the editors and is subsequently confirmed with the authors, the undeclared information will be published as an erratum in a future issue. This applies to all papers submitted after December 2001.

David J. K. Balfour, Ph.D.

Editor-in-chief, August 2006 to present; corresponding editor, 1997-2006

Gary E. Swan, Ph.D.

Editor-in-Chief, 1997-July 2006

Written on behalf of the editorial board of *Nicotine & Tobacco Research* on 1 October 2001; modified 19 May 2003, 18 May 2005, 20 August 2007, and 19 January 2009 to reflect current journal practice.