

Conflict of Interest Policy Document

Purpose

Patients rely on the independence and trustworthiness of medical professionals for any advice or treatment offered. A conflict of interest in medical practice arises when a medical professional entrusted with acting in the interests of a patient, also has financial, professional or personal interests, or relationships with third parties, which may affect their care of the patient. Multiple interests are common. They require identification, careful consideration, appropriate disclosure and accountability. When these interests compromise or might reasonably be perceived by an independent observer to compromise, the medical professional's primary duty to the patient, the medical professional must recognise and resolve this conflict in the best interests of the patient.

Target audience

Medical professionals and NSANZ members.

Roles and responsibilities

As a member of NSANZ a chapter of INS, the conflict of interest document needs to be understood and adhered to.

Author / Contributors

*denotes key contact

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Approved by

NSANZ Board 2020

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Policy Statement and Principles

1. Good medical practice involves [1,2]

1. Recognising potential conflicts of interest that may arise in relation to initiating or continuing a professional relationship with a patient.
2. Acting in your patients' best interests when making referrals and when providing or arranging treatment or care.
3. Informing patients when you have an interest that could affect, or could be perceived to affect, patient care.
4. Recognising that pharmaceutical and other medical marketing influences medical professionals and being aware of ways in which your practice may be influenced.
5. Recognising potential conflicts of interest in relation to medical devices and appropriately managing any conflict that arises in your practice.
6. Not asking for or accepting any inducement, gift or hospitality of more than trivial value, from companies that sell or market drugs or appliances or provide services that may affect, or be seen to affect, the way you prescribe for, treat or refer patients.
7. Not asking for or accepting fees for meeting sales representatives.
8. Not offering inducements or entering into arrangements that could be perceived to provide inducements.
9. Not allowing any financial or commercial interest in a hospital, other healthcare organisation, or company providing healthcare services or products to adversely affect the way in which you treat patients. When you or your immediate family have such an interest and that interest could be perceived to influence the care you provide, you must inform your patient.

2. Conflicts of interest – interaction with companies [3,4]

Medical personnel's relationships with industry should:

- Reflect core professional values such as transparency, accountability, trust and fairness;
- Not compromise, or be perceived to compromise, medical personnel's professional judgment and professional integrity;
- Be open and transparent, able to withstand public and professional scrutiny, meet public and professional standards and expectations and adhere to relevant legislative and regulatory requirements;
- Promote effective stewardship and responsible use of health care resources.

Professional autonomy and clinical independence is an essential component of high - quality medical care as well as medical professionalism. Medical personnel must have the freedom

to exercise their professional judgement in the care and treatment of patients without undue influence by individuals or outside parties including industry.

NSANZ will commit that educational activities, scientific programs, products, services and advocacy positions are independent of Company influence, and will develop and adopt policies and procedures that foster independence.

NSANZ will separate efforts to seek Educational Grants, Corporate Sponsorships, Charitable Contributions, and support for Research Grants from their programmatic decisions.

NSANZ will be transparent by making conflict of interest policies and/or forms available to their members and the public and will disclose Company support to their members and the public.

NSANZ will control the use of Charitable Contributions in a manner that is aligned with the Society's strategic plan and mission.

NSANZ will only accept Corporate Sponsorship of an item or program if the item or program is aligned with the society's strategic plan and mission and will make reasonable efforts to seek multiple Corporate Sponsors for sponsored items or programs.

When providing NSANZ CME programs, will not seek support for product-specific topics and will make reasonable efforts to achieve a balanced portfolio of support for each NSANZ CME program.

NSANZ will not permit Companies to select (or influence the selection of) recipients of Research Grants.

NSANZ will base Clinical Practice Guidelines on scientific evidence and will follow a transparent guideline development process that is not subject to company influence.

NSANZ will adopt written standards for licensing that are intended to prevent misuse, unintended use, and modification of licensed materials, prohibit modification of licensed materials in a way that would change their meaning, and prohibit use of Society trademarks to imply Society endorsement of Company products or services.

3. Presentations at Professional Meetings [4]

Meeting organisers and participants must not be in a position of conflict of interest by virtue of any affiliation with the supporter(s) of those activities. Speakers and presenters must declare any relevant interests, including direct or indirect support to attend a particular meeting.

NSANZ members supported by industry to speak at a meeting should ensure their presentation is scientifically accurate and balanced.

The program for such activities must declare the support and/or other aid received.

Any financial relationship valued at more than AU\$500.00 must be disclosed.

NSANZ contends that:

- Disclosure of financial relationships does not imply impropriety. The conflict of interest disclosure form (COI) must be completed by any affected party at least once per year. Affected parties may also include those whose family members have a potential conflict. The form can be found [here](https://www.neuromodulation.com/assets/ins-coi-policy6-2011.pdf):
<https://www.neuromodulation.com/assets/ins-coi-policy6-2011.pdf>
- It is the obligation of the affected party to disclose all interests which may be construed as a conflict of interest, real or implied.
- A financial interest is defined as anything of actual or potential monetary value. This may include, but is not limited to, salary, consulting fees, honoraria, stock, stock options, patents, copyrights and royalties.
- Where the value is potential the percentage of the total stock options should be declared.
- Disclosure is required of all NSANZ activity participants and those who serve as representatives of, and leaders within NSANZ.

Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement

- NSANZ members must include in their presentation a statement either to disclose any potential or direct conflict of interest, or, alternatively, to state that they have no conflict of interest. All authors must disclose any financial and personal relationships with other people or organisations that could inappropriately influence (bias) their work.
- For oral presentations: a conflict of interest disclosure statement should be at the beginning of the presentation (i.e., first or second slide to be the disclosure statement slide).
- For poster presentations: the conflict of interest disclosure statement should be included at the bottom of the poster even if there is no conflict of interest to declare, your presentation must include the statement "I have no potential conflicts of interest to report".

References

1. AHPRA - Conflict of Interest Procedures v1 – RM007 April 2015
2. Australian Medical Association, Doctors' Relationships with Industry 2018
 - <https://ama.com.au/position-statement/doctors-relationships-industry-2018>
3. Council of Medical Speciality Societies (CMSS) Code for Interactions with Companies (April 13, 2015)
 - <https://cmss.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/CMSS-Code-for-Interactions-with-Companies-Approved-Revised-Version-4.13.15-with-Annotations-1.pdf>
4. International Neuromodulation Society (INS) – Conflict of Interest Policy
 - <https://www.neuromodulation.com/assets/ins-coi-policy6-2011.pdf>