

Reporting of conflicts of interest of panel members and chairpersons of guidelines in anaesthesiology.

A cross-sectional study

Damien Wyssa¹, Martin R Tramèr^{1,2}, Nadia Elia^{1,3}

¹Division of Anaesthesiology, Geneva University Hospitals, Geneva, Switzerland; ²Faculty of Medicine, University of Geneva, Geneva, Switzerland; ³Institute of Global Health, University of Geneva, Geneva, Switzerland



Introduction

We studied the way conflicts of interest (COIs) of panel members and chairpersons, and the influence of sponsors, of clinical practice guidelines are reported in the anaesthesiology literature.

Design

Cross-sectional analysis of guidelines published in five anaesthesiology journals, from 2007 to 2016.

Results: Reporting of COIs and sponsors, and procedures applied to minimize COIs, according to journal

	Anesthesiology	An & An	Anaesthesia	BJA	EJA	Total
Number of analysed guidelines	12	13	19	4	17	65
Reporting of COI disclosures (n=65)						
Reported in the published article (n=31)	3/12 (25%)	8/13 (62%)	8/19 (42%)	4/4 (100%)	8/17 (47%)	31/65 (48%)
<i>Format of the published COI disclosures</i>						
Distinct paragraph including the term "interest"	3/3 (100%)	0/8 (0%)	7/8 (88%)	4/4 (100%)	0/8 (0%)	14/31 (45%)
Distinct paragraph, not clearly identified	0/3 (0%)	6/8 (75%)	1/8 (12%)	0/4 (0%)	8/8 (100%)	15/31 (48%)
No distinct paragraph*	0/3 (0%)	2/8 (25%)	0/8 (0%)	0/4 (0%)	0/8 (0%)	2/31 (7%)
<i>Disclosure of COI of panel members</i>						
Reported lack of COI	3/3 (100%)	1/8 (12%)	1/8 (12.5%)	1/4 (25%)	1/8 (12%)	7/31 (23%)
Reported COI, with description of potential influence	0/3 (0%)	0/8 (0%)	1/8 (12.5%)	0/4 (0%)	0/8 (0%)	1/31 (3%)
Reported COI, without description of potential influence	0/3 (0%)	7/8 (88%)	6/8 (75%)	3/4 (75%)	7/8 (88%)	23/31 (74%)
<i>Disclosure of COI of chairpersons</i>						
Reported lack of COI	3/3 (100%)	4/8 (50%)	0/8 (0%)	0/4 (0%)	0/8 (0%)	7/31 (23%)
Reported COI, with description of potential influence	0/3 (0%)	0/8 (0%)	0/8 (0%)	0/4 (0%)	0/8 (0%)	0/31 (0%)
Reported COI, without description of potential influence	0/3 (0%)	1/8 (12%)	5/8 (63%)	0/4 (0%)	2/8 (25%)	8/31 (26%)
COI not reported	0/3 (0%)	0/8 (0%)	1/8 (12%)	0/4 (0%)	0/8 (0%)	1/31 (3%)
Chairperson not identified	0/3 (0%)	3/8 (38%)	2/8 (25%)	4/4 (100%)	6/8 (65%)	15/31 (48%)
Not reported in the published article, or hidden behind access barriers (n=34)	9/12 (75%)	5/13 (38%)	11/19 (58%)	0/4 (0%)	9/17 (53%)	34/65 (52%)
Sponsor of the guideline (n=65)						
Reporting of sponsor (n=17)	3/12 (25%)	2/13 (15%)	5/19 (26%)	1/4 (25%)	6/17 (35%)	17/65 (26%)
Reported that there was none	0/3 (0%)	2/2 (100%)	3/5 (75%)	0/1 (0%)	0/6 (0%)	5/17 (29%)
Reported, with description of potential influence	0/3 (0%)	0/2 (0%)	1/5 (25%)	0/1 (0%)	0/6 (0%)	1/17 (6%)
Reported, without description of potential influence	3/3 (100%)	0/2 (0%)	1/5 (25%)	1/1 (100%)	6/6 (100%)	11/17 (65%)
No sponsor reported (n=48)	9/12 (75%)	11/13 (85%)	14/19 (74%)	3/4 (75%)	11/17 (65%)	48/65 (74%)
COI and/or sponsor disclosed (n=34)	3/12 (25%)	8/13 (62%)	9/19 (47%)	4/4 (100%)	10/17 (59%)	34/65 (52%)
Need for procedures to minimize COI (n=34)						
Not needed ¹	0/3 (0%)	0/8 (0%)	0/9 (0%)	0/4 (0%)	0/10 (0%)	0/34 (0%)
Unclear ²	0/3 (0%)	1/8 (12%)	1/9 (11%)	1/4 (25%)	1/10 (10%)	4/34 (12%)
Needed ³	3/3 (100%)	7/8 (88%)	8/9 (89%)	3/4 (75%)	9/10 (90%)	30/34 (88%)
Procedures applied to minimize COI (n=30)						
Reported and described	0/3 (0%)	1/8 (14%)	2/8 (25%)	0/3 (0%)	1/9 (11%)	4/30 (13%)
No mention of any procedures taken	3/3 (100%)	6/8 (86%)	6/8 (75%)	3/3 (100%)	8/9 (89%)	26/30 (87%)
COI and sponsor not disclosed (n=31)	9/12 (75%)	5/13 (38%)	10/19 (53%)	0/4 (0%)	7/17 (41%)	31/65 (48%)

An & An: Anesthesia and Analgesia; BJA: British Journal of Anaesthesia; EJA: European Journal of Anaesthesiology; COI: conflict of interest ; *under the title or subtitle; 1: reported lack of COI of chair and panelist and no sponsor; 2: although panelists declared having no COI, there was a lack of disclosure of a sponsor or the chairperson could not be identified; 3: at least one COI or sponsorship disclosed

Conclusion

COIs were reported in about half of the published guidelines in the anaesthesiology literature. A clear description of COIs of panelists and/or chairs, and their potential influence on the guideline recommendations, remained poorly documented. Standardized and explicit ways of reporting COI are needed.

Conflicts of interest

MRT is the Editor in Chief of the EJA. NE is a Methods Editor of the EJA. We declare that we have no other conflicts of interest and ensure that we have not received any financial support from third parties regarding the results reported in this study.