

Policy on conflicts of interest for ISAD Fellows and affiliated members

Introduction

The International Society for Affective Disorders exists to promote research and education into affective disorders. Through research ISAD aims to;

- improve the understanding of the conditions amongst professionals and the public
- improve the recognition and treatment of affective disorders leading to better health outcomes
- reduce the public health burden of the disease

The purpose of the conflicts of interest policy is to provide guidance on how ISAD Fellows and affiliate members should acknowledge allegiance to particular groups, organisations or interests which may excessively influence their judgement or actions. The issue is particularly sensitive when such interests are private and/or may result in personal gain.

The policy does not provide a definition of how to manage every possible conflict of interest; rather, it provides a set of principles on which decisions can be based.

ISAD's expectation is that Distinguished Fellows, Fellows and Affiliate members will always endeavour to;

- recognise such interests
- act independently
- act in the greater interest of ISAD

when giving their best judgements on matters of policy and procedure. It is essential that the Society's Officers and members are seen to exercise such independence, should their judgements become subject to public scrutiny.

To this end, it is prudent for Distinguished Fellows, Fellows and Affiliates to disclose any potential conflicts of interest they have. It is proposed that these should be declared on joining the Society and updated on a regular basis. The record will be held as a document in the ISAD office, open to scrutiny by the ISAD membership.

As a guide, the risks that should be addressed lie in the following areas:

1. Where individuals have patents or inventions from which they may derive personal benefit in the area of affective disorders

2. Where there is ownership or part ownership of a company with interests in the area of affective disorders. This would include holding shares of major companies in one's own name, or those of dependent family members.
3. Accepting a personal retainer from any company with an interest in affective disorders
4. Acting as a consultant to any company with an interest in affective disorders
5. Acting as an expert witness, whether friendly or hostile to any company with an interest in affective disorders
6. Holding a research grant from any company with an interest in affective disorders
7. Membership of the speakers' bureau for any company
8. The acceptance of paid speaking engagements in industry supported symposia
9. The acceptance of travel or hospitality not related to a speaking engagement

Related concerns are appropriate if the relationships implied under any of 3 to 9 also exist in respect of a relationship to a voluntary organisation, a charity, a law firm, a department of government, an investment company or any other formally constituted body with interests in the field of affective disorders.

It is not expected that the specific details of financial arrangements should be disclosed.

Members and officers of the Council will also be expected to declare their primary employment(s).

In exceptional cases the President of ISAD may decide to relax a specific policy where this is judged to be in the best interests of the Society. In such cases the President will refer to the Executive Committee as appropriate.