

Conflicts of interest in across scholarly disciplines and organisations – can we learn from each other



WCRI: Symposium 9

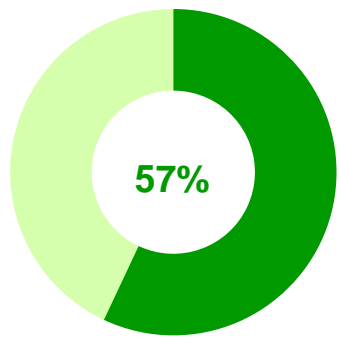
5th of June 2024

Andreas Lundh

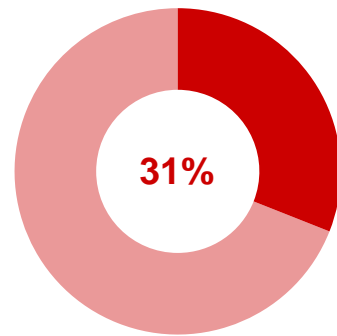
Cochrane Denmark & Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine Odense
University of Southern Denmark

Frequency of conflicts of interest in medicine

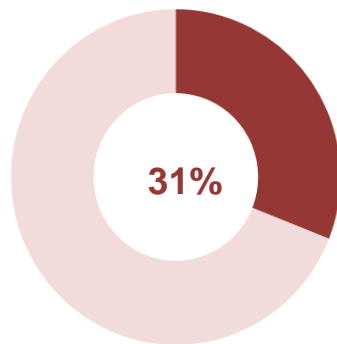
Authors' with financial conflicts of interest



Clinical trials

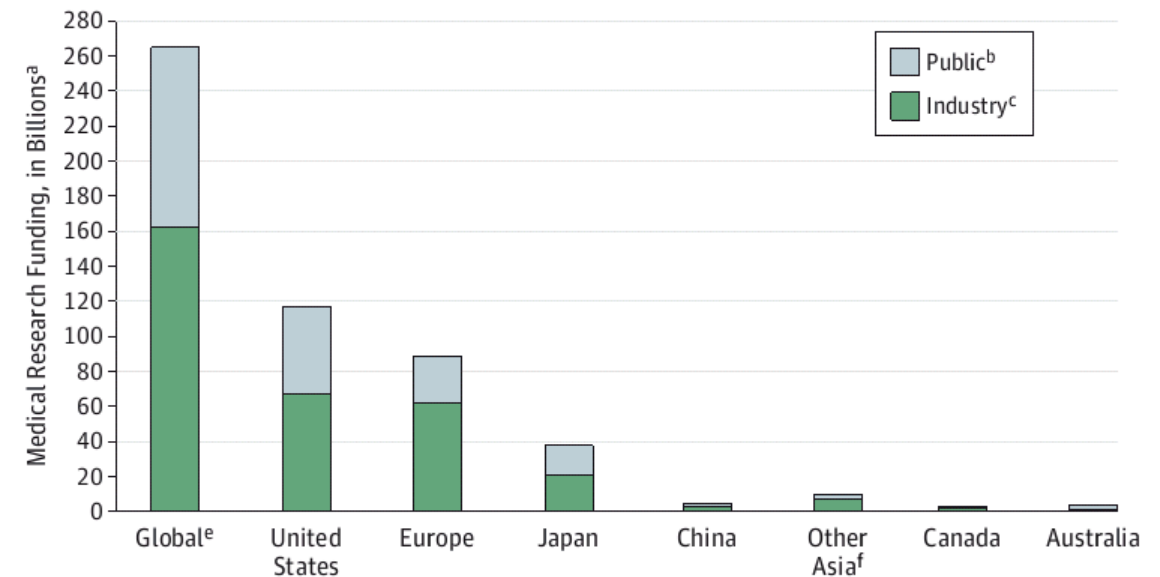


Systematic reviews



Editorials & commentaries

Research funding



Moses JAMA 2015

Hakoum BMJ Open 2016
Hakoum J Clin Epidemiol 2017
Grundy JAMA 2018

Addressing of authors' COI in medicine

Transparency

ICMJE DISCLOSURE FORM

Date:

Your Name:

Manuscript Title:

Manuscript Number (if known):

General payments	\$32,311.26 (28 payments)
Research payments	N/A
Associated research funding	\$465,065.20 (7 payments)
Ownership and investment interest	N/A



Management

Context and types

For **Comment, Seminars, Reviews, Therapeutics, and Series**, *The Lancet* will not publish if an author, within the past 3 years, and with a relevant company or competitor, has any **stocks or shares, equity, a contract of employment, or a named position on a company board**; or has been asked by any organisation other than *The Lancet* to write, be named on, or to submit the paper

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Quantity - minimisations

the **first** and **last authors** must have **no relevant financial conflicts**, and **at least two-thirds** of the **author team** as a whole must be **free** of relevant financial conflicts.



Evidence from other disciplines

- **Engineering**

- Survey of 38 academics in nanotech with industry collaborations
 - *Lack of data ownership 72%*
 - *Confidentiality agreements 84%*

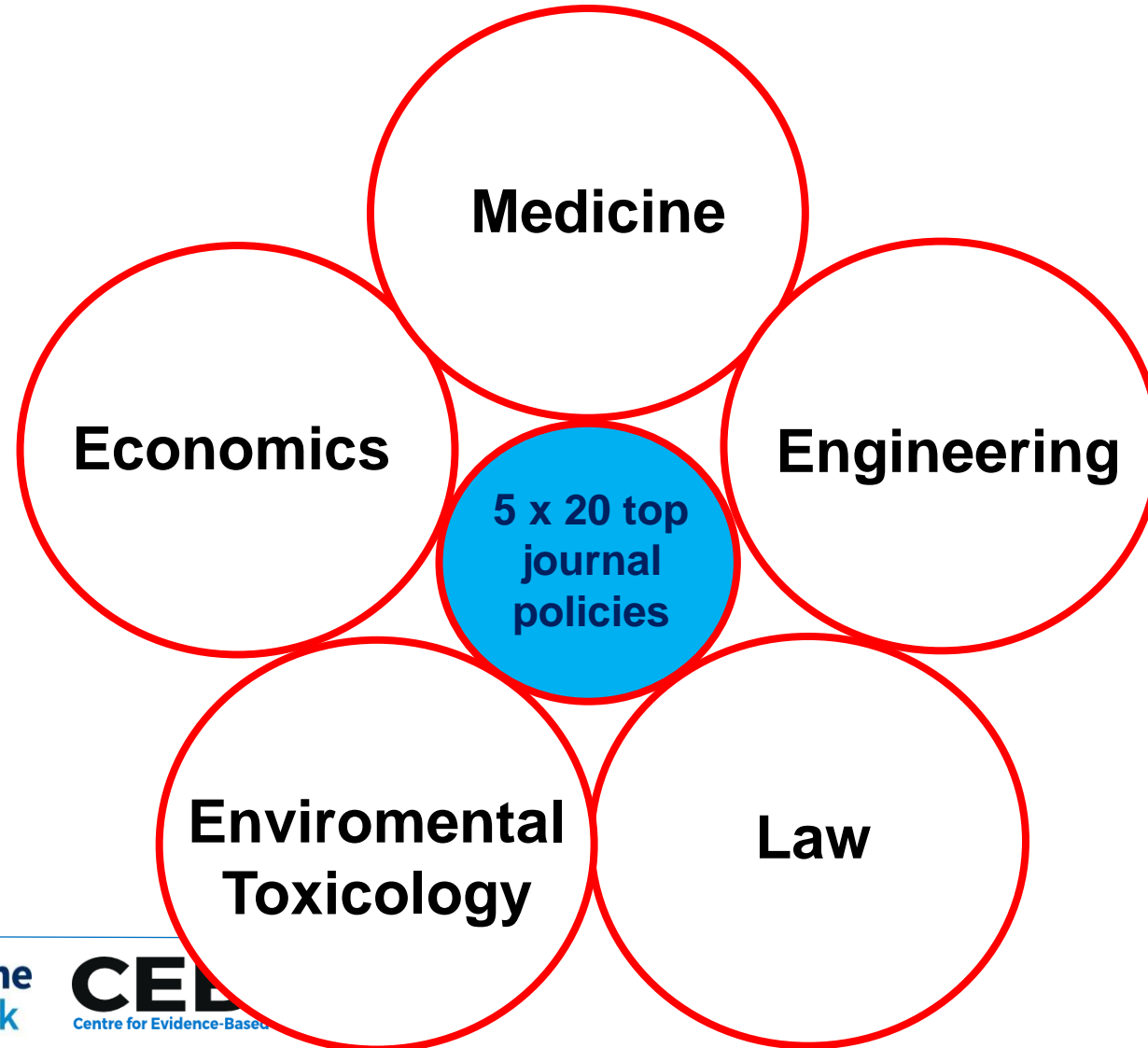
McComas Sci Eng Ethics 2012

- **Economics**

- Cross-sectional study of 19 leading economists
 - 15 of 19 had financial interests to private financial institutions
 - Only 2 of 15 disclosed interests in journal publications

Carrick-Hagenbarth Camb J Econ 2012

Cross-disciplinary comparison



*Krejcikova OSF 2023
WCRI Oral Presentation 27*

Conflicts of interest policies in publishing

Journals	N = 100
Only publisher's policies	54%
Journal's and publisher's policies	14%
Only journals' policies	32%

Lessons learned from study

Information often hard to find

Information in different documents

One hand does not know what the other is doing

Level of detail vary between policies

Framework for conflicts of interest

- **Financial conflicts of interest**
- **Non-financial conflicts of interest**

- **Transparency**
- **Management**
- **Enforcement of policies**

- **Other issues**
 - Context (i.e. types of publications)
 - Types of interests (e.g. advisory boards and stocks)
 - Monetary threshold (e.g. 10,000 USD)
 - Time-period (e.g. 3 years for ICMJE)
 - Relevance (who decides on this?)

Examples of addressing conflicts of interest

..... *We do not, however, publish pieces for which the author was paid taxable income by an organization other than the relevant employer - that is, income from an outside organization or corporation that merely benefited the author, rather than funded the expenses of a project....[management - prohibition]*

Stanford Law Review

.... *Should the Journal discover a relevant conflict after accepting a piece, its author's initial failure to disclose can be grounds for revocation of acceptance.....[enforcement]*

Yale Law Journal

The multitude of conflicts of interest policies

**Journals &
Publishers**

**Funding
bodies**

Institutional

**Ethics
committee**

**Committees
and societies**

**Legal
regulation**

Challenges

Organisational silos
Lack of harmonisation
Duplication of efforts
Poor overview

Conclusions

- Conflicts of interest are important in many scholarly disciplines
- Medicine primarily relies on disclosure
- Stricter management and enforcement policies are seemingly used in law
- Conflicts of interest policies are used in silos across multiple settings
- Harmonisation and transfer of concepts between disciplines should be considered