

E-8.031 Conflicts of Interest: Biomedical Research.

Avoidance of real or perceived conflicts of interest in clinical research is imperative if the medical community is to ensure objectivity and maintain individual and institutional integrity. All medical centers should develop specific guidelines for their clinical staff on conflicts of interest. These guidelines should include the following rules: (1) once a clinical investigator becomes involved in a research project for a company or knows that he or she might become involved, she or he, as an individual, cannot ethically buy or sell the company's stock until the involvement ends and the results of the research are published or otherwise disseminated to the public; (2) any remuneration received by the researcher from the company whose product is being studied must be commensurate with the efforts of the researcher on behalf of the company; (3) clinical investigators should disclose any material ties to companies whose products they are investigating including: financial ties, participation in educational activities supported by the companies, participation in other research projects funded by the companies, consulting arrangements, and any other ties. The disclosures should be made in writing to the medical center where the research is conducted, organizations that are funding the research, and journals that publish the results of the research. An explanatory statement that discloses conflicts of interest should accompany all published research. Other types of publications, such as a letters to the editor, should also include an explanatory statement that discloses any potential conflict of interest.

In addition, medical centers should form review committees to examine disclosures by clinical staff about financial associations with commercial corporations. (II, IV) Issued March 1992 based on the report "Conflicts of Interest in Biomedical Research," adopted December 1989 (JAMA. 1990; 263: 2790-2793); Updated June 1999 based on the report "Conflicts of Interest: Biomedical Research," adopted December 1998.