

Cochrane's revised Conflict of Interest Policy – what you need to know

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Ruth Foxlee

**Trusted evidence.
Informed decisions.
Better health.**



‘New’ policy

- 2014 ***Commercial Sponsorship Policy***
 - *Conflicts of interest and Cochrane Reviews in the Editorial and Publishing Policy Resource (EPPR)*
- 2020 revision - ***Cochrane Conflict of Interest Policy for Cochrane Library Content***



Why have we revised the policy?

- Cochrane's Governing Board requested a review of the policy
- Conflict of Interest (COI) policies should be revised regularly and this was built in to the 2014 policy
- Our COI policy is key to maintaining our reputation for independence and credibility
- Creating content according to a rigorous COI policy can strengthen reader confidence



What hasn't changed

Review funding

- **Cochrane Reviews cannot be funded** by commercial organizations with a financial interest in the topic of a review

Authorship

- People **employed by a commercial organization** with financial interest in the review topic are still prohibited from authorship
- **First authors** must be free of all conflicts
- No **threshold for financial conflict**



What's changed

- **Narrower policy scope** – for people involved in producing Cochrane Library content only (companion policy to be developed)
- **≥67% (two-thirds)** of the author team must be free of all financial conflicts vs. >50% in the 2014 policy
- **The last author** as well as the first author must be free of all financial conflicts
- Restrictions on what role **people who have been involved in eligible studies** can play in a Cochrane review



What's changed

- Management strategy for cases where **not-for-profit organizations** employ Cochrane authors, or fund reviews and could be considered to have a specific interest in the outcome of the review
- **Wilful failure to disclose** relevant conflicts of interest, will be considered a form of scientific misconduct
- All **Cochrane Review Group and Editorial and Methods Department** staff should be free from relevant financial conflicts of interest



What's been made clearer?

- How to deal with **payments that are made to the individual's home institution** rather than to them personally
- The requirements for declarations of interest when **reviews are updated** and when **new authors are added**
- The **timeframes** in which conflicts are considered current – 36 months prior to title registration through to publication
- That a **peer reviewer** with a direct financial interest associated with a review cannot be involved in review
- The **responsibilities** of authors and of Cochrane Review Groups and Editorial and Methods Department



Policy launch date?

- Official launch date = date the policy comes into affect
- Planning to launch in October 1 2020
- Dependent on integrating the declaration of interest (DOI) form into editorial management systems
- Revised DOI form

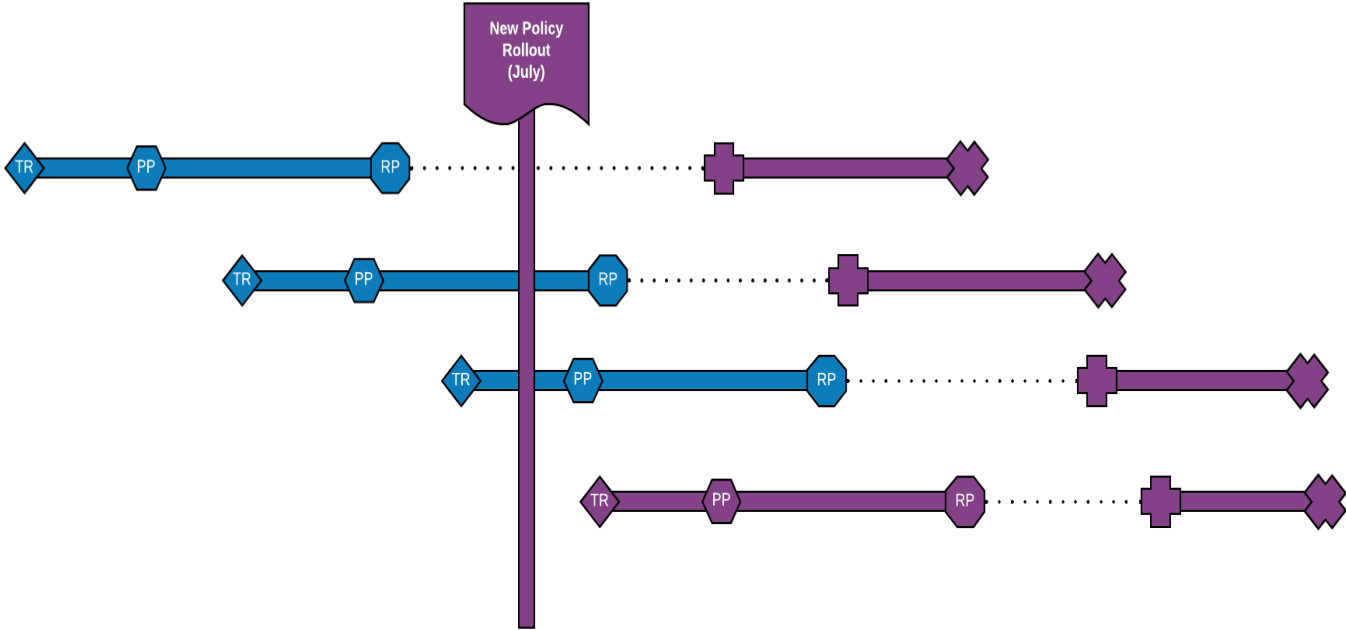


Applying the policy to CDSR content

- The 2020 policy will apply to all new Cochrane Review titles registered after October 1 2020
- The 2020 policy will apply to all Cochrane Review where the update begins after October 1 2020
- The 2014 policy will apply to ANY work that started before policy launch - i.e., titles registered, protocols underway or published, reviews underway and updates underway



Applying the policy to CDSR content



TR Title registered

PP Protocol published

RP Review published

Decision to update

Update published

Applying the policy: responsibilities

- Authors – providing timely, accurate and consistent declarations throughout the review lifecycle
- CRGs – should not allow titles submitted after policy launch, to be registered unless the author team complies with the new policy
- CRGs – ensure that the author teams for updates that begin after policy launch, comply with the new policy
- EMD – checking other Cochrane Library content (i.e., editorials and Cochrane Clinical Answers)



Implementation period

- Research Integrity senior editor & editor + other EMD staff working together as ‘COI implementation team’
- COI Policy Implementation Working Group
- Webpage for all COI policy information (incl. 2014 and 2020 policies)
- Developing supporting materials
- Training events



Training

- Virtual workshops for CRG Managing Editors
- Another introductory webinar - TBA
- Targeted training – e.g. CRG Networks
- Post launch – webinars as needed



Resources

- Online learning modules based on real COI scenarios
- Webinars recordings
- FAQs
- Decision trees/flowcharts
- Information about case referral and appeals process documentation/workflow
- Tools for authors
- Integration COI policy into staff induction packages (PSD)



More information

COI Portal - <http://conflictofinterest.cochrane.org/>

Email - COIArbiter@cochrane.org



