

THORAX DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

Guidance for authors

To be completed by all authors before publication can go ahead

Article
No _____

A competing interest exists when professional judgment concerning a primary interest (such as patients' welfare or the validity of research) may be influenced by a secondary interest (such as financial gain or personal rivalry). It may arise for the authors of a *Thorax* article when they have a financial interest that may influence -- probably without their knowing -- their interpretation of their results or those of others.

We, the editors of the *Thorax*, believe that to make the best decision on how to deal with a paper we should know about any such competing interest that authors may have. We are not aiming at eradicating competing interests -- they are almost inevitable. We will not reject papers simply because you have a competing interest, but we will make a declaration on whether or not you have competing interests.

We used to ask authors about any competing interests, but we have decided to restrict our request to financial interests. This is largely a tactical move. We hope that it will increase the number of authors who disclose competing interests. Our experience, supported by some research data, was that authors often did not disclose them.

Please answer the following questions (all authors must answer)

1. Have you in the past five years accepted the following from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the results of your study or the conclusions of your review, editorial, or letter:

_____ Reimbursement for attending a symposium?

_____ A fee for speaking?

_____ A fee for organising education?

_____ Funds for research?

_____ Funds for a member of staff?

_____ Fees for consulting?

2. Have you in the past five years been employed by an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the results of your study or the conclusions of your review, editorial, or letter?

3. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the results of your study or the conclusions of your review, editorial, or letter?

4. Have you acted as an expert witness on the subject of your study, review, editorial, or letter?

5. Do you have any other competing financial interests? If so, please specify.

If you have answered "yes" to any of the above 5 questions, we consider that you may have a competing interest, which, in the spirit of openness, should be declared. Please draft a statement to publish with the article. It might, for example, read:

Competing interests: RS has been reimbursed by Shangri La Products, the manufacturer of elysium, for attending several conferences; TD has been paid by Shangri La Products for running educational programmes and has her research registrar paid for by the company; JS has shares in the company.

If you did not answer "yes" to any of the four questions above, we will publish "Competing interests: None declared." (But see next paragraph)

We are restricting ourselves to asking directly about competing financial interests, but you might want to disclose another sort of competing interest that would embarrass you if it became generally known after publication. The following list gives some examples.

- (a) A close relationship with, or a strong antipathy to, a person whose interests may be affected by publication of your paper.
- (b) An academic link or rivalry with somebody whose interests may be affected by publication of your paper.
- (c) Membership of a political party or special interest group whose interests may be affected by publication of your paper.
- (d) A deep personal or religious conviction that may have affected what you wrote and that readers should be aware of when reading your paper.

If you want to declare such a competing interest then please add it to your statement.

To learn more about the thinking that has led to this policy please read the [editorial](#) by Richard Smith BMJ 1998;317:291-2.

Please complete option 1 or 2 as appropriate and sign below. If you answered "yes" to any of the 5 questions relating to financial competing interests (or you wish to disclose a non-financial competing interest), you should write a statement below.

It is important that you return this form as early as possible in the publication process. We will not publish your article without completion and return of the form.

