

INTERNATIONAL JOINT POLICY COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIETIES OF EPIDEMIOLOGY

IJPC-SE Working Group (WG) on Conflict-of-Interest and Disclosure [COI&D]

Terms of Reference (TOR), Revision Dated February 5, 2015

Working Copy Based On Executive Committee Input Dated March 9, 2015

Further updated on May 16 2015 to reflect WG changes

Further updated on July 20 2015 to reflect WG membership changes

Further updated on July 28 2015 to reflect WG membership changes

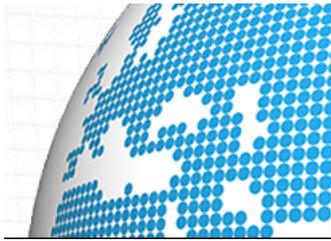
Further updated on November 18 2015 to do a systematic literature search vs. a systematic review

The International Joint Policy Committee of the Societies of Epidemiology (IJPC-SE), founded in 2006, is a consortium of 19 national and international member organizations. From Section 2 of the Founding Bylaws (ratified on November 19 2014), **the IJPC-SE operates at the nexus of research and policy**. The IJPC-SE's **mission** is to ensure the impartial application of epidemiology and epidemiologic evidence to health policy creation and implementation. The IJPC-SE's **goal** is to inform health policy, practice, research, and allied areas of endeavor by coordinating and facilitating professional member society-related activities. The latter involve health research and practice through the creation, implementation, application, and evaluation of evidence-based policies with a view to mitigating health risks and advancing the health of communities, locally and globally.

The **specific activities** of the IJPC-SE may include, but are not confined to, promoting the proper use of epidemiology to inform policy through a deliberate, transparent process of developing and evaluating epidemiological evidence-based policies and policy recommendations; developing and disseminating scientifically-grounded joint policy statements and issue papers; commenting on epistemological-related issues of the day; supporting sessions and presentations at member-society conferences for peer discussions and professional development; and, responding to health-related policies and issues by sending letters and other communication methods to governmental agencies and other organizations at the local, tribal/band, state or provincial, national and international levels.

The purpose of these activities is to bring to the attention of other epidemiologists, other scientists, public health professionals, medical doctors, policy-makers, and other stakeholders the IJPC-SE's position on any matter relating to health policy and practice, as well as to publicly share information on any other matter related to the sound practice and application of epidemiology to inform policy in the public interest.

***IJPC-SE COI&D Working Group Draft Terms of Reference (TOR), Revision dated February 5 2015
Working Copy Based On Executive Committee Input Dated March 9 2015; Updated July 28 & November 18 2015***



INTERNATIONAL JOINT POLICY COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIETIES OF EPIDEMIOLOGY

One role of the IJPC-SE is to work collaboratively across professional organizations of epidemiologists to reduce widening health disparities and build health equity, both locally and globally. With a core value of epidemiology being to protect public health in general, especially the health of the most vulnerable people in society, the mission statements of virtually every school of public health, department of epidemiology, or public health agency aspires to improve human health and promote wellness. Because the IJPC-SE and our member societies share these aspirations, we recognize that transparency is a critical element in the process of ensuring that the best available evidence informs policies designed to advance “health for all.”

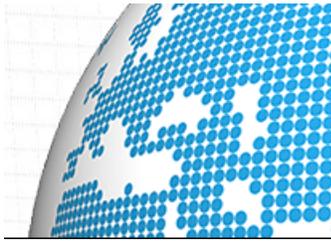
Mandate:

The topic of *Conflict-of-Interest and Disclosure (COI&D)* has become greatly important in the biomedical sciences and to epidemiologists around the world. This importance stems from:

- a)** The impact of various sources of funding on the objectivity of the biomedical sciences;
- b)** Biases that stem from industry sponsorship of research, or from political or other vested interests in the outcome and application of scientific studies outside of the public good, as well as in the process of publishing research findings, or in bringing them to the public domain at professional or academic conferences, meetings, forums; and
- c)** Suppression or repression biases or prejudice among researchers or funders (through political, religious, cultural or other means outside of the objective application of scientific rigor), which may not originate in any commercial interest.

Disclosure of possible conflicts is imperative so that these potential influences may be evaluated for bias when using epidemiological evidence to inform policy.

The need has thus arisen for a scholarly, robust position statement that addresses the multidimensional nature of the issues around COI&D and that can be universal enough to be used as guidance for individual epidemiology societies. The IJPC-SE Working Group will provide guidance to its member societies on the multiple dimensions that could create ethical and policy conflicts within the ever-evolving science of epidemiology.



INTERNATIONAL JOINT POLICY COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIETIES OF EPIDEMIOLOGY

The IJPC-SE is the umbrella organization of its individual member epidemiology societies. The task of its *Working Group on Conflict-of-Interest and Disclosure* is to produce an integrated position statement on the topic, based on a comprehensive, systematic search of the literature related to its focus in order to produce a balanced review of the state of the art on COI&D. The strategy adopted for the literature search will be documented.

The Members of the IJPC-SE *Working Group on Conflict-of-Interest and Disclosure* are:

Chair:

Colin Soskolne

Working Group Members:

Carl Cranor

Amy Davis

Manley Finch

Eduardo Franco

Bruce Lanphear

Leanne Lindsay (non-voting)

Leah Phillips

Fiona Sim

Student Representatives: Brianna Rogan (non-voting)

Shailesh Advani (non-voting)

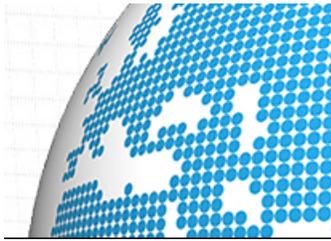
Accountability:

The *Working Group on Conflict-of-Interest and Disclosure* of the IJPC-SE leads this initiative for the IJPC-SE. The Group's work-product will be seen as a recommendation to the IJPC-SE Board whose member organizations hold the final say regarding its content and dissemination. As per the IJPC-SE's Founding Bylaws, individual member societies will determine independently the extent of their engagement in the process of developing the anticipated Position Statement.

Expected Outcomes:

The expected timeline for a complete, well-vetted first draft of the document is the late summer of 2015, followed by an iterative period of review and revision by the IJPC-SE member societies before a formal IJPC-SE vote to approve the final, consensus *Position Statement on Conflict-of-Interest and Disclosure*. Please see the following link for a brief

***IJPC-SE COI&D Working Group Draft Terms of Reference (TOR), Revision dated February 5 2015
Working Copy Based On Executive Committee Input Dated March 9 2015; Updated July 28 & November 18 2015***



INTERNATIONAL JOINT POLICY COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIETIES OF EPIDEMIOLOGY

description of this IJPC-SE initiative at <http://www.ijpc-se.org/initiatives.php>

Working Group Functions and Responsibilities:

Members are invited by the Chair from among the IJPC-SE's Board, with consensus authorization of the Board, and, unless otherwise indicated, serve an unspecified term that will conclude once all of the Working Group's deliverables have been completed, anticipated by no later than June, 2016. Membership on the Working Group will ideally include broad representation from various stakeholder groups including at least one student (the student(s) will not be voting Member(s) of the Group). As the focus of the Working Group evolves over time, the level of representation from the various stakeholder groups may change to meet evolving needs.

A disclosure statement from each non-Board Member who wishes to serve on the Working Group will be vetted by the Executive Committee of the IJPC-SE and the full Board prior to their participation in the Working Group. All disclosure statements will be posted on the IJPC-SE website.

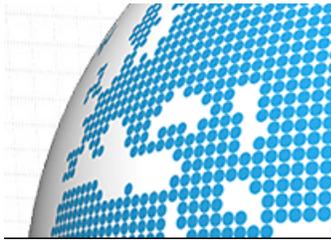
Working Group Member Function and Responsibilities:

The Working Group will deliver a high quality, scholarly, robust *Position Statement on Conflict-of-Interest and Disclosure* that will distill relevant thinking given the state of the art on the topic as it relates to the science of epidemiology in contemporary public health research and practice. The Position Statement is expected to provide normative guidance on the topic.

Expectations of Working Group Members include:

- Represent their peers;
- Ensure professional inclusiveness;
- Share information and solicit feedback;
- Voice opinions;
- Provide feedback;
- Make decisions;
- Attend meetings;
- Maintain confidentiality of entries in the Dropbox that are not in the public domain;
- Disclose any conflict-of-interest (COI) arising that might unduly influence the outcomes of this work beyond the objective, scientific, technically-valid and practical requirements appropriate for creating the Position Statement.

*IJPC-SE COI&D Working Group Draft Terms of Reference (TOR), Revision dated February 5 2015
Working Copy Based On Executive Committee Input Dated March 9 2015; Updated July 28 & November 18 2015*



INTERNATIONAL JOINT POLICY COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIETIES OF EPIDEMIOLOGY

The average time commitment for a Working Group Member is estimated to be up to 5-7 hours/month, including meetings, reading, preparing, and reviewing materials/documents.

Frequency of Meetings:

- Monthly, utilizing virtual (e.g., telehealth, teleconference, web conference) and in-person meetings, with an attempt to maximize attendance via Doodle polling ahead of scheduling each call
- Convened as required at the behest of the Chair
- The Chair may invite selected individuals with recognized expertise who are not Members of the Working Group to join a meeting based on agenda relevance

Communication:

Communication among Members of the Working Group will occur primarily through email correspondence, Working Group meeting minutes, and the Dropbox.

An agenda and supporting documents (as necessary) will be sent to the Working Group 1 week prior to any Working Group meeting.

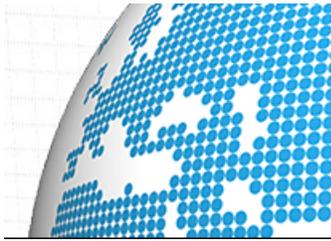
Formal notes will be taken at each Working Group meeting and shared with Working Group Members no later than one week prior to the next scheduled meeting of the Working Group.

All Working Group Members are expected to share information as appropriate with other Working Group Members to ensure a broad understanding of decisions and to monitor issues relating to their own constituencies and bring them forward for open consideration.

Minutes and other relevant information from the Working Group will be shared with the IJPC-SE Executive Committee and Board once they have been approved by the Working Group.

External Advisory Panel:

Once a completed draft of the Position Statement is deemed ready for review, the Working Group will invite no more than five experts, external to the IJPC-SE, to objectively critique the document. External experts will be vetted by the Working Group and the IJPC-SE Executive Committee; they will be asked to formally disclose any COI before their critiques.



INTERNATIONAL JOINT POLICY COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIETIES OF EPIDEMIOLOGY

All disclosure statements will be posted on the IJPC-SE website. The timing of this review will be at the discretion of the Working Group, but likely would be timed to take place before engaging the Board and the member societies in any review.

Quorum:

Quorum is formed with attendance by:

- The Chair; and
- At least four other (voting) Working Group Members.

In the event of Quorum not being reached, the meeting may proceed, but any decisions will be postponed until considered for ratification at the next meeting when Quorum is achieved.

Decision-Making:

Decisions shall be made by consensus of the Working Group Members. Consensus is defined as:

Members can live with the proposed position or decision, even though it may not be their preferred one, and thereby give their consent to proceed on the decision and to support it.

In the event that a final document is produced and with which one and no more than two Members disagree, such dissenting Members will be invited to provide brief language that addresses their issue(s) along with alternative recommendations to be incorporated as an Addendum into the final consensus report of the other Members. A dissenting view will be no longer than 750 words.

If three or more voting Members of the Working Group disagree, then consensus is not achievable and the work will either need to continue until consensus is achieved, or the Working Group decides to resign. Should consensus not be achieved, the IJPC-SE Executive Committee will assume responsibility for the direction of the project and reorganizing the Working Group.