

I am a member of CSE and serve on the publications committee of a society whose journal will be searching for a new editor. I wonder whether any readers of Science Editor are aware of guidelines regarding conflict of interest for the editor of a medical journal.

The journal in question publishes many articles about drug studies, and most of the senior members of the society have financial relationships with pharmaceutical companies for participating in drug studies, speaker bureaus, or consultantships.

I was on the advisory board of a biomedical company while I was editor of Neurology. Over the years, we received a handful of manuscripts from scientists in that company. It was a simple matter to hand them over to my associate editor, who was then responsible for assigning reviewers and making the ultimate decision as to publication. As for the journal to which I am now referring, probably 25% of the submissions involve sponsored drug studies, and if the associate editor is from the same institution as the editor, as is usual, the conflict would remain.

Our current editor has no ties with pharmaceutical companies, but he is among a few senior members of the organization without such relationships.

The problem is compounded by the journal's being specific to a single disease entity. Thus, if the editor had a financial relationship with "Company X", and a manuscript

of a drug produced by "Company Y" was being considered, there would be a potential negative bias against a competing company's drug.

I see no solution other than prohibiting our new editor from having any current financial relationships with any pharmaceutical company and insisting that the editor and members of his/her immediate family not own stock in any of the companies.

Advice from CSE members would be appreciated.

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