

AAN Clinical Practice Guideline Conflict of Interest Policy

1. The American Academy of Neurology (AAN) is committed to producing independent, critical, and truthful clinical practice guidelines (CPGs) regarding drugs and technologies that impact patients who have or are at risk for neurological diseases. To the extent possible, the AAN believes that those who produce the CPGs and those who have a financial stake in the success or failure of the products appraised in the CPGs should be kept separate and distinct. However, it may be difficult to form an expert panel devoid of potential conflicts; therefore, the AAN carefully balances known biases of panel members, reviews conflict of interest disclosure, limits participation, and provides strong oversight of the panels.
2. Elimination of conflicts of interest (COIs) is not the goal. The goal is to balance interests and to minimize the impact of bias in the guideline development process. When it is not feasible to form an expert panel devoid of potential conflict, it is essential to balance the panel between those with and without conflicts (financial, research, academic, etc.). At least half of the panel members should not have a significant conflict of interest. For guidelines of broad scope, panel members should not all be from the same institution or study group. If there is a recognized, credible controversy on the chosen guideline topic, both sides should be represented on the panel.
3. The AAN has established a Conflict of Interest Advisory Panel who assists in setting and updating COI clinical practice guideline policy, updating forms and reporting practices, balancing panels, determining if financial ties or other competing interests constitute a conflict, and determining management strategies.
4. All outside interests must be reported to the AAN by authors before work on developing a clinical practice guideline begins; these interests must be updated annually and at the time of publication. When completing the first COI reporting form, the reporting period will include all current interest and interest in the 2 years prior to completing the form.
5. The following are considered when analyzing potential conflicts of interest:
 - a. the nature and content of the guideline
 - b. nature of the interest
 - c. how closely the interest is related to the guideline
 - d. the degree to which the guideline recommendations may affect the interest
 - e. the degree to which the interest may affect guideline development
 - f. the degree of risk to the AAN and to patients

6. The following interests that have a direct overlap to the content of the CPG will trigger a formal review by the Conflict of Interest Advisory Panel, including discussions about management options:
 - a. \geq \$20,000 in fees (cumulative) for consulting, speaker's bureaus, advisory boards, expert testimony, or other committees paid to the author directly or indirectly. Indirect income includes deposits into a university account under the author's control
 - b. \geq \$10,000 or \geq 1% equity interest, exclusive of mutual funds
 - c. \geq 20% of author effort (cumulative) devoted to clinical procedure or diagnostic test
 - d. Any rights to intellectual property, including patent rights, milestone payments, and royalty income
 - e. Officer, director, partner, or manager of a financially interested business (e.g., start-up company)
7. Those with any of the above interests will not be lead author of a guideline or section of a guideline. In addition, the Quality Standards Subcommittee or Therapeutics and Technology Assessment Subcommittee may choose reserves the right not to appoint an individual as a lead author or the lead of a section of a guideline if the individual has other relationships deemed significant but below the thresholds mentioned above (e.g., expert testimony, equity interest). The AAN forbids commercial participation in guideline projects. Being a current employee of a pharmaceutical company or a device manufacturer prevents participation.
8. Authors who do not demonstrate due diligence in completing and updating the AAN COI reporting form will be removed as an author panel member and refused privilege of authorship on any AAN guideline until the reporting form is complete. The literature search for the CPG will not occur until all authors have completed the COI reporting form and it is checked by the lead author.
9. Author COIs will be made available to peer reviewers and in publication.