

Conflict of Interest Management in Healthcare Research and Practice

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Conflict of interest in biomedical research arises when professional judgment concerning primary interests—research integrity and the protection of participants—may be unduly influenced, or reasonably perceived as influenced, by secondary interests. This lecture reviews major COI scenarios, including consulting relationships, employment by sponsors, long-term industry funding, equity and patent ownership, intra-organisational rivalry, and institutional joint ventures. It examines how these relationships can shape study design, data analysis, interpretation, publication, review, and governance. The lecture argues that COI is not a problem that can be fully eliminated, but one that must be managed proportionately. Core principles include transparency, fairness, accountability, and attention to both individual and structural sources of bias. Management options discussed include disclosure, recusal, role restrictions, independent analysis and monitoring, external review, divestiture, and institutional oversight. The session also extends the discussion beyond financial ties to non-financial and institutional COI, emphasising that trustworthy research requires both individual professionalism and robust organisational systems for assessment and management.

Profile

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