

Reporting of conflicts of interest in guidelines of preventive and therapeutic interventions

ABSTRACT

Despite some recent improvement, reporting of conflicts of interest in clinical guidelines published in influential journals is largely neglected.

INTRODUCTION

Background Guidelines have assumed a major role in forming practitioner and patient decisions about appropriate health care. It is important that such efforts are not affected by conflicts of interest and that guidelines are transparent to such potential conflicts. This is even more significant for clinical guidelines published in influential medical journals that are likely to have a major impact upon therapeutic and preventive clinical care and public health worldwide. However, there has been no study of the reporting of conflicts of interest in guidelines published in medical journals. We undertook an evaluation of this issue in a sample of publications of clinical guidelines.

CONCLUSION

Conclusions Transparency, by means of disclosure of potential conflicts, could foster public trust. Such information would take minimal space to report and may help to obviate doubts regarding the integrity of clinical guidelines. Both guideline authors and journal editors should pay more attention to this important issue.