Item 25. Sources of funding and other support (such as supply of drugs), role of funders

Examples—“Grant support was received for the interven‑ tion from Plan International and for the research from the Wellcome Trust and Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). The funders had no role in study design, data collection and analysis, decision to publish, or preparation of the manuscript.”

“This study was funded by GlaxoSmithKline Pharmaceu‑ ticals. GlaxoSmithKline was involved in the design and con‑ duct of the study and provided logistical support during the trial. Employees of the sponsor worked with the investigators to prepare the statistical analysis plan, but the analyses were performed by the University of Utah. The manuscript was prepared by Dr Shaddy and the steering committee mem‑ bers. GlaxoSmithKline was permitted to review the manu‑ script and suggest changes, but the final decision on content was exclusively retained by the authors.”

Explanation—Authors should report the sources of funding for the trial, as this is important information for readers assessing a trial. Studies have showed that research sponsored by the pharmaceutical industry are more likely to produce results favouring the product made by the com‑ pany sponsoring the research than studies funded by other sources. A systematic review of 30 studies on funding found that research funded by the pharmaceutical industry had four times the odds of having outcomes favouring the sponsor than research funded by other sources (odds ratio 4.05, 95% confidence interval 2.98 to 5.51). A large proportion of trial publications do not currently report sources of funding. The degree of underreporting is difficult to quantify. A survey of 370 drug trials found that 29% failed to report sources of funding. In another survey, of PubMed indexed randomised trials published in December 2000, source of funding was reported for 66% of the 519 trials. The level of involvement by a funder and their influence on the design, conduct, analysis, and reporting of a trial varies. It is therefore important that authors describe in detail the role of the funders. If the funder had no such involvement, the authors should state so. Similarly, authors should report any other sources of support, such as supply and preparation of drugs or equipment, or in the analysis of data and writing of the manuscript