

Conflict of Interest

This policy statement was developed by the International Women's Health Committee and approved by the Executive and Council of the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC).

This policy applies to the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada Executive, Council, committee members, representatives, volunteers, and staff.

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy statement is to promote transparent, unbiased decisions made in the public interest through the identification of conflicts of interest and the provision of ways to resolve the conflict. The SOGC is an organization for advancing and disseminating knowledge relating to women's health. It is important to retain the public's trust and confidence in order to play such a role.

DEFINITIONS

Conflict of interest is a breach of an obligation that has the effect or intention of advancing an individual's own interest or the interests of others in a way detrimental to the interests of, or potentially harmful to, the public or to the integrity and fundamental mission of the SOGC. Conflicts of interest and the appearance of conflicts of interest must be avoided and, when present, vacated.

Individuals are expected to conduct themselves at all times in accordance with the highest ethical standards in a manner that will bear the closest scrutiny, and are responsible for seeking guidance from the appropriate source before embarking upon activities that might create or that might be perceived as creating a conflict of interest.

PROCEDURE

The existence of an actual or potential conflict of interest does not necessarily preclude the involvement of the individual in the situation where the conflict has arisen or may arise, but SOGC does insist the conflict be declared by the

individual, resolved in conjunction with the appropriate source, and vacated.

The SOGC Executive, Council, committee members, representatives, volunteers, and staff should use personal integrity and good judgement to avoid conflicts of interest.

AREAS OF POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST

1. Use of Information

The SOGC Executive, Council, committee members, representatives, volunteers, and staff shall not knowingly take advantage of, or benefit from, information obtained in the course of their official duties or responsibilities that is not generally available to the public.

2. Use of Influence

During and after their tenure in office, members of the SOGC Executive, Council, committee members, representatives, volunteers, and staff shall not act in such a manner as to take improper advantage of their previous office or position.

3. Bias

The SOGC Executive, Council, committee members, representatives, volunteers, and staff must practise unconflicted loyalty to the interests of SOGC that are consistent with the public interest. This accountability supersedes any conflicting loyalty, such as that to advocacy or interest groups, or membership of other boards or staff. If bias threatens to influence decisions or create the appearance of unfairness, a conflict of interest shall be declared and consideration given to whether the individual should withdraw from decision-making or involvement in the issue.

4. Gifts and Benefits

The SOGC Executive, Council, committee members, representatives, volunteers, and staff shall not solicit any gifts or benefits, nor shall they accept any gifts or benefits other than incidental gifts, customary hospitality, or other non-monetary benefits of nominal value.

This document reflects emerging clinical and scientific advances on the date issued and is subject to change. The information should not be construed as dictating an exclusive course of treatment or procedure to be followed. Local institutions can dictate amendments to these opinions. They should be well documented if modified at the local level. None of these contents may be reproduced in any form without prior written permission of the SOGC.