

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

This Policy Statement was developed by the International Women's Health Programme Committee and approved by the Executive and Council of the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) in March 2003.

This policy applies to the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) Executive, Council, Committee members, representatives, volunteers, and staff.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this code 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.

DEFINITION

Conflict of interest is a breach of an obligation that has the effect or intention of advancing one's own interest or the interests of others in a way detrimental to the interests, or potentially harmful to the public or 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 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 be questionable.

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 it does insist the conflict be declared by the individual, resolved in conjunction with the appropriate source, and vacated.

Personal integrity and good judgment are used to avoid conflicts of interest.

AREAS OF POTENTIAL CONFLICT

The following are some areas where there could be a conflict of interest.

1. USE OF INFORMATION

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. USING INFLUENCE

After they leave their position, 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

SOGC Executive, Council, Committee members, representatives, volunteers, and staff must represent unconflicted loyalty to the interests of SOGC consistent to the public interest. This accountability supersedes any conflicting loyalty, such as that to advocacy or interest groups, or membership on 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

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

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