

Editorial

Biomedical, Academic, and Industry Interaction

As the Leadership of the American Society for Bone and Mineral Research and the former and current Editors-in-Chief of the *Journal of Bone and Mineral Research*, we acknowledge the importance of interactions between the pharmaceutical and device industries and the faculty of academic research institutions and the benefits to the advancement of science and human health that can flow from the research which results from these relationships. At its best, this interaction brings together the intellectual strength of the partners in these relationships and supports it with the organizational and financial resources of industry. As a result, a growing role of industry support of biomedical research has become a vital aspect of medical and health research in the 21st century.

The representatives of academia and industry share as an important objective of their efforts, performance of effective scientific investigations and development of better and safer treatments for major diseases and conditions that detract from human health, quality of life, and survival. However, these interactions also encompass inevitable differences in additional objectives, sometimes leading to powerful financial pressures, which can result in real or potential conflicts of interest.

Over the past two decades, recognition of the subtle pressures and differences of viewpoints of industry sponsors, individual authors, reviewers, and readers has led to new requirements for published work, including acknowledgment of any potential conflicts of interest and competing interests of authors and documentation that "independent" authors have full access to the data set underlying a publication. Many journals, including the *JBMR*, have adopted new stricter guidelines that include listing such conflicts of interest and obtaining written assurance from authors that they have access to all pertinent data sets.

The *JBMR* has limited tools available to police such conflicts of interest and to assure that the content of presentations at meetings and publications in journals is pristine and free from commercial bias. As noted in the January 2006 Editorial (*J Bone Miner Res* 2006;1:1-13), "all scientific publication depends on the twin pillars of the integrity of the authors and of reviewers. We depend on the honesty of the authors and rely on their assertions that they have had sufficient access to the data to be convinced of its reliability. We depend on honest and forthright review unimpeded by any personal or financial bias for or against what is written." This assurance depends on a totally forthright and honest interchange between the authors and the journal or the society. Such a relationship between the *JBMR* and the authors who submit their manuscripts for review is of paramount importance, and the *Jour-*

nal is totally dependent on the honesty and integrity of the authors to insure publication of unbiased science.

As a consequence, the *JBMR* exhorts its authorship to practice and its readership to demand honesty and integrity to maintain the stature and respect that the *Journal* has achieved over the past two decades. We must have trust and confidence that our authors have practiced and will continue to practice such honesty and thereby contribute to the reputation for integrity that is so vital to the *Journal*. We encourage each of you, our authors and our readers, to exert peer pressure to ensure complete compliance with the efforts of the *Journal* to maintain its high standards.

However, the ASBMR and the *JBMR* are also exploring these contemporary ethical issues more boldly and may in the near future require additional changes in editorial policy. Thus, the *JBMR* editorial team and the leadership of the ASBMR have begun to ask a number of important questions, including the following. (1) Should the *Journal* require that the authors and the industry sponsor of studies submitted to the *JBMR* send with the submission a jointly signed letter that documents that the authors either held and analyzed all the data or had full access to and reviewed all of the data and analyses on which the study was based? (2) Should the *JBMR* adopt in entirety the "Principles for Protecting Integrity in the Conduct and Reporting of Clinical Trials" recently developed by the American Association of Medical Colleges (www.aamc.org/research/clinicaltrialsreporting/start.htm)?

These and other issues are of paramount importance, and in pursuit of the appropriate answers, ASBMR and *JBMR* have convened a task force of Society Leaders and Editors of Journals, who publish clinical research in osteoporosis and other related bone diseases and disorders of mineral metabolism. The charge to the task force is to develop additional procedures to safeguard the trust of our colleagues and the public and to assure that the reporting of clinical trial and similar results in the *Journal* is complete and unbiased. We are confident that these steps will further ensure that hidden biases will not be a factor in any *JBMR* publication, and will foster and help protect the benefits to science and human health that can flow from collaborations between academia and industry.

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