Ethical policies PubMed

PubMed recently tightened their requirement for the handling of ethical policies in the areas of Conflict of Interest, Human and Animal Rights, and Informed Consent.

They now require that the publisher require all authors to declare any Conflict of Interest in detail. So each author individually by name must declare any potential CoI, or declare that s/he does not have any CoI. General collective statements like "The authors declare that there is no Conflict of Interest" is NOT sufficient.

Authors must also state that they conformed with the Helsinki Declaration of 1975, as revised in 2000 (5) concerning Human and Animal Rights, and that they followed out policy concerning Informed Consent as shown on Springer.com. Our ethical policies are online at:

- Statement of Human and Animal Rights
- Conflict of Interest
- Informed Consent

Implementation:

In order to show PubMed that the journal complies with this policy, the instructions to authors must clearly require compliance from the authors. In addition, the journal homepage on Springer.com should list the requirement in an area that can easily be found by readers, not just by authors. PubMed insists on us making the compliance requirements obvious to readers as well, not just to authors.

In order to comply with the ethical requirements, the following sentences should be included in a separate section of each article just before the reference list. The section should be called "Compliance with Ethics Guidelines". This has to be a requirement in the instructions to authors. In order to apply for review by PubMed, you should have at least two issues that comply with these requirements.

Conflict of Interest:

The Conflict of Interest statemenst should list each author separately by name:

John Smith declares that he has no conflict of interest.

Paula Taylor has received research grants from Drug Company A.

Mike Schultz has received a speaker honorarium from Drug Company B and owns stock in Drug Company C.

If multiple authors declare no conflict, this can be done in one sentence:

John Smith, Paula Taylor, and Mike Schultz declare that they have no conflict of interest.

For studies with human subjects include the following:
All procedures followed were in accordance with the ethical standards of the responsible committee on human experimentation (institutional and national) and with the Helsinki Declaration of 1975, as revised in 2008 (5). Informed consent was obtained from all patients for being included in the study.

If doubt exists whether the research was conducted in accordance with the Helsinki Declaration, the authors must explain the rationale for their approach, and demonstrate that the institutional review body explicitly approved the doubtful aspects of the study.

If any identifying information about patients is included in the article, the following sentence should also be included:
Additional informed consent was obtained from all patients for which identifying information is included in this article.

For studies with animals include the following sentence:
All institutional and national guidelines for the care and use of laboratory animals were followed.

For articles that do not contain studies with human or animal subjects performed by any of the authors:
While it is not absolutely necessary, we recommend to include the following sentence, just to make sure that readers are aware that there are no ethical issues with human or animal subjects:
This article does not contain any studies with human or animal subjects performed by any of the authors.

(Guenther Eichhorn, February 2013)