



This document was prepared by the ILCOR conflict of interest committee to guide knowledge synthesis unit or expert systematic review selection .

Conflict of Interest Guidance on selecting ESRs, SRs, Mentees and TF content experts

The Issue

How to manage intellectual, industrial and financial COI when deciding on ESR and KSU assignments?

1. Some of our ESRs sit on Taskforces (Jan Jansen, Michelle Welsford, Ian Drennan, Lars Anderson, Tetsuya Isayama and CEE committee (Laurie Morrison).
2. One of our KSUs is led by a TF chair (Mike Donnino) and one of the KSU staff is a TF member (Lars Anderson).
3. Some of our ESRs and one KSU team are very published in resuscitation and their work is cited as sentinel pieces shaping the interpretation of the literature. The PICOST may include reporting on their papers.
4. TF members are often asked to play the role of content expert without consideration for intellectual COI.
5. ESRs and KSUs are on contract to the AHA so receive financial payment for work. There is a differential where ESRs are paid 10,000 and KSUs are paid 50,000 USD.
6. TF make recommendations to CEE if they feel the question should be addressed by a KSU or an ESR.
7. CEE has developed a tool which they apply to PICOSTs. High scoring PICOSTs are usually assigned to KSUs.(attached) Testing is ongoing currently applying the tool retrospectively to all the completed SRs to ensure they were assigned appropriately based on the tool.

Specific Guidance from COI

- A. How do we manage the COI when the KSU or ESR is a TF chair or TF member and the TF is recommending assignment to a KSU or ESR?
 - a. Assignment to the KSU or ESR is done through CEE which can look at those recommendations on their merits.
 - b. COI concerns on these cases can be managed in the usual method. Task force chairs or member should disclose relationships, abstain from voting, and document this. More complex COI issues should be referred to the COI leads for advice.
 - c. If a TF chair has a KSU association this is not in itself a conflict relevant to the CoSTR for that PICOST. They may feel that their KSU is best placed for the work, but the CEE should assess that independently.
 - d. Which KSU a PICOST is assigned to is mostly an internal question for ILCOR which is neutral with respect to the final CoSTR. It is only important if that KSU leader/KSU participant is felt to have a significant conflict relating to the PICOST itself.

- B. How do we manage the CEE member COI when the CEE is scoring the PICOST on the CEE tool and making a decision on assignment to ESR vs KSU
 - a. CEE members should follow the same COI rules as TF Chairs and members. They should declare relevant conflicts and step aside from scoring/decisions which are impacted by significant conflicts. Other CEE members should complete the task.
 - b. In the unlikely event that a significant number of the CEE committee are conflicted on the same question to the extent that the committee cannot perform the task then the ILCOR Exec may have to assign several nonconflicted individuals from outside the CEE to complete this. if a significant percent of the CEE committee is conflicted, then the CEE

should consider expanding membership to include individuals without significant conflicts.

- C. How do we manage the COI when the content expert or ESR or KSU are published authors in the scope of work defined by the PICOST?
 - a. An ESR, CE or KSU member should not usually be performing bias assessment/grade analysis on their own papers.
 - b. If they are authors on key publications for that PICOST then they should not be assigned that role.
 - c. There is a fair bit of nuance and common sense needing to be applied here. A multicentre trial in which you are listed as 30th author from a participating centre might not stop you from serving as ESR, although lead authorship would, if especially it is one of only 2 or 3 controlled trials included.

All such intellectual conflict has to be declared/documentated and we need to consider whether the perception of this conflict by readers of the publication would diminish the value/authority of the final CoSTR. Even if we believe that a review has been performed cleanly, the perception of bias may undermine our hard work.