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Letter to the Editor

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To Our Readers

Dr. Moore raises important issues regarding disclosure of potential conflict of interest in his letter to the editors regarding a recent review article on paclitaxel by Khanna et al. (A Review of Paclitaxel and Novel Formulations Including Those Suitable for Use in Dogs. *J Vet Internal Med* 2015;29:1006–1012). The Journal takes matters dealing with conflict of interest very seriously and has an established policy that is enforced for every submitted manuscript. We also recognize that perceptions of conflict of interest can be based on subjective interpretation, and that what might appear to one person to be adequate disclosure of a potential conflict of interest might not appear so to another reader. In addition, in fields as small as many of the specialty areas in veterinary medicine, it can be challenging to identify authors and reviewers who do not have some potential conflict of interest for a given topic. The intent of the Journal's conflict of interest policy is to provide full disclosure of potential conflicts of interest with complete transparency, thereby allowing readers, authors, and reviewers to use the information published in the Journal with confidence. The policy was not designed as a comprehensive set of rules to cover every conceivable situation that could arise with respect to potential conflict of interest.

One form of potential conflict of interest exists whenever an author of a manuscript has the opportunity to influence the reader about products or services of a commercial entity, because he or she has a financial or personal relationship with that entity. The Journal provides conflict of interest disclosure guidelines, and authors of all submitted manuscripts must complete a conflict of interest disclosure statement at the time the manuscript is uploaded to Manuscript Central (the Journal's online submission site). Authors are asked to check relevant categories including advisory board membership, consultancy, employment, patents, payments for development of educational materials, royalties,

speaker honoraria, stock holdings, and other items. As Dr. Moore indicates, the authors of the paclitaxel review article did disclose financial associations with several drug companies, but he is concerned that the emphasis of the review article on a single proprietary product likewise reflects a conflict of interest.

As editors, we are committed to complete disclosure of potential conflicts of interest by authors, a thorough and fair scientific review process by experts in the relevant field of inquiry, and an equitable editorial process that respects the expertise of our authors, reviewers, and associate editors. We recognize that disclosure of potential conflict of interest is only a first step, and management of conflict is an ongoing process that requires continued vigilance. This process involves oversight by the editors-in-chief and associate editors not only at the time of first submission of the manuscript, but also with each submitted revision because circumstances can change over time. Also, conflict of interest not only is a potential issue for authors but also for reviewers and editors. Finally, the policy must provide guidelines to redress conflicts that are identified. Consequently, over the upcoming year, we plan to review not only our conflict of interest policy guidelines but also procedures for managing potential conflicts of interest when they are identified during submission, review, and editorial processing of manuscripts. We appreciate the support of our readers and their enthusiasm for improving the objectivity of articles published in the Journal.

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