



## Bioprospecting and Development: Welcoming “Conflict of Interest” Contributions

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### Editorial

Prospecting and development are risky processes, no matter how the fields are selected, and require the vision, imagination, dreams, and very hard work of the data miner—especially in biological and health-related fields. To chase the prospector from the mine too early, or as it is often said in development circles “to wean the inventor from the invention”, is a major mistake that has become part of most publications’ Conflict of Interest policies. Imagine that you are prospecting for clues on how to develop a better substitute blood vessel material, to save legs from amputation, and your early product attempts are put into the hands of your most virulent competitor for evaluation and publication—to prevent your “Conflict of Interest”, especially if you stand to make money as well as get credit if it actually works. The likelihood of showering this product development with the necessary “tender, loving care” and perseverance to solve persistent problems is low and the public is denied a potential valuable breakthrough. The legs must come off. We remain with the old crutches.

As a long-time worker in the field of “parts for people”, from hips to hearts, I have seen the productivity of this and related fields shrink to acres of shriveled weeds, as the true innovators have been forcefully replaced with more institutionally acceptable no-possible-conflict (and controversy-avoiding) substitutes. It has already been publicly noted by none other than the Director of the US National Institutes of Health (Dr. Francis Collins: Visions for Medicine in the 21st Century, at [transcriptvids.com/V/yqZOJRnKZzU.html](http://transcriptvids.com/V/yqZOJRnKZzU.html)) that Eroom’s Law

(Moore’s Law, backwards) prevails in medical and biological research, with greater and greater costs yielding fewer and fewer products—the exact opposite of the progress in integrated circuit development! Journal publication policies are part of this problem, as I surmised when head of the Publications Committee and then President of a major research Society. As a result, I have evolved over many years toward this new conclusion: We require a new Conflict of Interest statement for our Journals reporting creative concepts. Here it is:

It is of particular benefit that inventors/innovators/developers/prospectors of new technologies remain actively engaged in the evaluation, incremental improvement and promotion of these technologies for public utility. It is appropriate and expected that these contributors will participate in the rewards as well as the risks of introducing novel technologies.

Our Publication Policy is to encourage the active association of committed professionals and other advocates or beneficiaries, as well as critics, of new technologies with the publication of evaluative, descriptive, basic biological or engineering studies of the performance and outcomes of such concepts and products, without regard to financial arrangements in respect to these issues.

Disclosure statements regarding such arrangements are neither required nor desired.

This, to my knowledge, is only a personal position at this time. Your comments are welcome!