

DSRB Update: NHG's Revised Conflict of Interest Policy

Summary

NHG's conflict of interest policy requires investigators to avoid having any conflicts of interest in a research study, or otherwise declare these to the DSRB. With effect from 1st January 2015, this policy has been revised to require all study team members involved in the design, conduct and reporting of research to declare any financial conflicts of interest to the DSRB, on an annual basis or more frequently as required by the DSRB.

Revised Policy Requirements

In conducting a research study, all researchers involved in the study should not have conflicting interests that may adversely affect protection of the participants. Such conflicting interests may include significant financial interests, which can include any ownership of monetary value, including but not limited to salary or payments for services, equity interests, intellectual property rights, and board or executive relationships.

All study team members involved in the design, conduct and/or reporting of research will be required to declare to DSRB any significant financial interests related to the research study. These declarations must state if any of the investigators, study team members or their immediate family members, have any financial interests related to the research study that fulfil the threshold limits requiring disclosure to DSRB. (Please refer to the Addendum to the Investigator's Manual or the NHG Research Website for a full description of these limits.)

Declaring Financial Conflicts of Interest

Financial conflict of interest declarations for all study team members must be made at the following time points:

- At initial application to DSRB.
- At every continuing review, i.e. at least annually.
- Whenever such conflicts of interest arise during the study, within 30 calendar days of first knowledge of such conflicting interests.

Each study team member (including the Principal Investigator) will be required to complete the Annex B – Conflict of Interest Declaration Form, which can be downloaded from the NHG Research Website. The completed forms are to be scanned and uploaded onto ROAM, accompanying the appropriate DSRB submission.

The DSRB will review the disclosed financial interests to determine their impact on the integrity of the research. The DSRB may impose a management plan to eliminate, mitigate or manage the financial interests.

Revised Minimum Training Requirements for Study Team Members

To ensure that researchers are adequately educated on NHG's conflict of interest policies, all investigators and study team members will be required to read the following additional core modules on the online Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI):

- NHG-Singapore. Overview of the Domain Specific Review Board (DSRB) Review Process.
- Conflicts of Interest in Research Involving Human Subjects.

Resources

Researchers are strongly advised to read and familiarise themselves with the full details of NHG's conflict of interest and minimum training policies, which are available from the following resources:

- Addendum to the Investigator's Manual, Chapter 7.5 Conflicts of Interest. Available from: <https://www.research.nhg.com.sg/wps/wcm/connect/rom/p/nhgromp/resources/research+online+guidebooks>
- NHG research website – Financial Conflicts of Interest (FCOI) Policy for Principal Investigators and Study Team Members: <https://www.research.nhg.com.sg/wps/wcm/connect/rom/p/nhgromp/hspp/financial+conflict+of+interest/fcoi+policy>
- NHG research website – DSRB Minimum Training Policy for Researchers: <https://www.research.nhg.com.sg/wps/wcm/connect/rom/p/nhgromp/hspp/dsrb+-+minimum+training+policy+for+researchers/minimum+training+policy+for+researchers>

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