

MNDRIA RESEARCH COMMITTEE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

A conflict of interest (Col) refers to potentially competing obligations that may appear to influence an individual's professional actions. Col's may be financial, personal or organisational. A Col does not imply inappropriate motivation or misconduct on the part of an individual. They are common in research and it is important they are disclosed and dealt with appropriately. A Col is a serious issue because it may compromise an individual as well as the activities of an organisation. Col's have the potential to compromise decisions that should be made impartially and could undermine community trust in research.

Both perceived and actual Col should be identified. A perception that a Col exists may be as serious as an actual conflict, raising concerns about the integrity of individuals or the management practices of the organisation. For this reason, the possibility of a perceived Col must be treated as though the conflict exists.

Examples of Col's are:

1. Involvement with the application under review and/or collaborations;
2. Professional relationships, social relationships or interests;
3. Teaching or supervisory relationships;
4. Financial relationships or interests.

Procedures and Responsibilities

Researchers frequently have a Col that cannot be avoided. Expert advice is required for decision-making processes and thus experts may have some link to the matter under consideration. Individual researchers will be conflicted from time to time and should be ready to acknowledge the conflict and make disclosures as appropriate. Such disclosure will enable MNDRIA to determine whether it is appropriate to involve an individual in the review process in relation to a particular application.

Prior to the grant applications, MNDRIA's Executive Director Research shall ask Research Committee members to declare any potential Col's. Should any potential Col arise at any time during the grants review process, it is the duty of Research Committee members to declare a conflict at the first available opportunity.

At the Grants Allocation Meeting, Col's shall be listed and tabled as the first substantive agenda item of the Meeting. Research Committee members cannot speak at the Grants Allocation Meeting if a grant application is from their institution unless they are asked to comment, by the Chairperson. Principal and Co-Investigators must leave the room when their application is discussed. In addition, it is the responsibility of the Chairperson to decide whether disclosure of other interests is sufficient or if it is appropriate an individual with a Col hears discussion without contributing or is excluded from discussion / the decision-making process verbal and/or written. The exclusion or attendance of the individual concerned should be recorded in the minutes.

MNDRIA keeps a register of long-standing declarations of interest.

Endorsed by the MND Australia board on 25 May 2017

Signed by David Ali (President)

Review Period: This policy will be reviewed biennially.