Background
In 2018, author conflict of interest (COI) controversies made the headlines, bringing this topic to the forefront of the scientific community. COI also became a topic of conversation for information professionals. We explored this issue and uncovered the variability in publishers' guidelines and potential challenges authors may face in navigating the COI landscape. By understanding the complexities of COI as an aspect of scholarly communications process, information professionals can play a key role in supporting research quality and transparency.

Description
Before developing our support service, information was gathered regarding the scholarly communication environment at our institution; focusing on the journals that our researchers submit their manuscripts to most frequently and how these publishers inform authors about COI requirements.

After compiling the COI guidelines for the top 20 journals/publishers, a chart was developed displaying relevant characteristics including: COI guideline visibility (how many clicks to their policy), whether the guidelines were specific to the publisher or at the journal level, ease of submission (was there a separate COI submission form), if they support the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) recommendations, and where in the manuscript submission process do authors provide COI statements.

Outcome
The Library staff believe this resource will help enhance COI best practices for all authors at our Institution and beyond. We plan to evaluate the journals each year to ensure that this LibGuide showcase the titles and publishers that MSK authors publish in most frequently. We will update this resource to address emerging standards and related guidelines to support compliance and research transparency, and leverage the LibGuide's content as a launching pad for opportunities for librarian outreach, discussion, and education.

In Depth: “COI at a Glance” Tab

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COI at a Glance
Chart representing top journals for the MSK community with key categories.

Tab Content

Overview
Key contacts and sample COI statement and acknowledgement of financial support statement.

Publishers
Inclusion criteria was based on a five year analysis of where our authors publish. Links to publisher homepages and publisher COI policies were included.

Journals
Inclusion criteria was based on the scholarly periodicals that are represented in our core grant or that the MSK author community most frequently publish in. Links to journal homepages and COI policies were included.

Resources
Section highlights author guidelines, recommendations, best practices and COI policies and tools (e.g. International Committee of Medical Journal Editors standard, Committee of Publication Ethics standards, Convey).

MSK Documents
Related content and links to MSK Policy on Financial Conflict of Interest & Conflict of Commitment. This section will continue to grow over time.

Legend

Guideline Visibility – Number of mouse clicks from the journal home page to the journal’s COI policy

Author Form – Is there a COI author form available?

Standards – Journal supports ICMJE or COPE Reference Standards