

Policy Statement for the handling of conflicts of interest in BIPS research

This statement aims to provide a basis for the discussion and management of conflicts of interest in order to ensure independent and free research and publication activity.

1. The BIPS is aware of conflicts of interest that may occur in conjunction with third-party funded scientific research. Conflicts of interest may affect the institute as a whole, particular departments or research units as well as individual employees. Such conflicts may arise in particular in collaborations with the profit-oriented industry, in particular the pharmaceutical and food industry. However, conflicts of interest may also involve other funding parties such as health insurances or research foundations of the federal government and the federal states.
2. Following national and international discussions, the BIPS defines a conflict of interest as follows: A conflict of interest is a condition, a combination of circumstances, where a primary interest to deliver valid scientific results may be corrupted by a secondary interest, e.g. of scientific advancement, personal or institutional reputation or financial gains. It is irrelevant whether the interference will actually occur or whether the involved persons are aware of the conflict of interest.
3. The BIPS facilitates an outright, internal and external constructive and appropriate handling of conflicts of interest. Main ideas are transparency, the pursuit of a fair balance of interests and the avoidance of personal disadvantages of employees.
4. The BIPS bears responsibility for the public reputation of medical and public health research. The institute is involved in the public discourse concerning the proper handling of conflicts of interest in research, particularly in medical and epidemiological societies as well as in research foundations.
5. The BIPS develops codes of conduct and structures to ensure that professional decisions will be based upon primary interests instead of secondary interests. This includes transparency, management rules and codes of practice, prohibitions, the implementation of a conflict of interest committee and procedures to facilitate the sensitisation for conflicts of interest among staff.

The institute council is responsible for the assessment and management of conflicts of interest. All departments and employees are involved in the process.