



PO Box 2325, Briarcliff Manor, NY 10510 / Tel & Fax: 914 618 4453 / Email: ismpp@ismpp.org / www.ISMPP.org

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR MEDICAL PUBLICATION PROFESSIONALS, INC.
(ISMPP)

CODE OF ETHICS

Introduction

The International Society for Medical Publication Professionals, Inc. (ISMPP) is a non-profit, voluntary professional membership association dedicated to advancing medical publication planning and development, supporting medical publication professionals, and ensuring ethical medical publication practices.

ISMPP promotes quality professional standards and practices, and encourages members to meet such standards. Members should act in a manner that promotes integrity and reflects positively on the individual professional, ISMPP, and the medical publication profession, consistent with accepted ethical and legal standards.

ISMPP has adopted these voluntary ethics guidelines to serve as a professional resource for medical writers and communicators, publication planners, editors, publishers, and other professions represented by ISMPP members.

I. General Professional Guidelines

As a matter of professional responsibility, members should:

- A. Comply with laws, regulations, policies, and ethical standards governing professional practice and related activities, including applicable rules of government bodies, professional associations and credentialing organizations.
- B. Support and disseminate the Society's ethics principles to other professionals involved in the medical publication process.
- C. Contribute to the development of the profession by mentoring and training newer professionals, and by sharing information concerning best practices.
- D. Not engage in behavior in violation of accepted ethical or legal standards, including conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation.
- E. Keep up-to-date in their continuing professional development by regularly attending continuing education programs and making a commitment to life-long learning

II. Professional Services Guidelines

As a matter of professional responsibility, members should:

- A. Solicit services in a professional manner, and provide vendors with complete, truthful, and accurate information concerning projects and deliverables.
- B. Promote equal opportunity and diversity in professional activities.
- C. Provide accurate and truthful information in all representations concerning qualifications, experience, competency, and performance of services, including representations related to professional status and/or area(s) of special competence.
- D. Provide appropriate professional referrals when unable to provide competent professional assistance.
- E. Provide quality professional services in a timely and efficient manner, and provide clients and/or customers with complete, truthful, and accurate information while performing professional services.

III. Specific Professional Conduct Guidelines

A. Publication Preparation Guidelines

When preparing or developing publications (i.e., abstracts or manuscripts), members should:

- 1. Never misrepresent clinical research and/or clinical trial results, including the fabrication or misreporting of data.
- 2. Identify appropriate trial protocols clearly, if available, when publishing clinical trial results (e.g., NCT number).
- 3. Report primary results of a multi-center clinical trial first, and thereafter issue secondary publications from the same trial, when appropriate, with citation of the primary publication.
- 4. Identify and report negative and inconclusive clinical trial results, as appropriate.
- 5. Strive for accuracy, completeness, fair balance and avoid commercial product promotion.
- 6. Refrain from duplicate submissions of a manuscript, consistent with accepted professional standards.

7. Recognize the author's ultimate responsibility for publication content, including the selection of references.
8. Apply appropriate standards, guidelines, and position statements of professional organizations including, but not limited to:
 - a. Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors or ICMJE). *www.icmje.org*
 - b. The Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials (CONSORT) Statement: Revised Recommendations for Improving the Quality of Reports of Parallel-Group Randomized Trials. *www.consort-statement.org*
 - c. Principles for the Conduct and Disclosure of Clinical Trials (Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America or PhRMA). *www.phrma.org/clinical_trials/*
 - d. Joint Position on the Disclosure of Clinical Trial Information via Clinical Trial Registration and Databases (PhRMA/IFPMA/EFPIA/JPMA). *www.ifpma.org/clinicaltrials*
 - e. Good Publication Practice (GPP) for Pharmaceutical Companies (GPP Working Group). *www.gpp-guidelines.org/*
 - f. International Society for Medical Publication Professionals (ISMPP) position statement: the role of the professional medical writer. (*www.ismpp.org*)

B. Publication Disclosure Guidelines

When preparing or developing publications, members should:

1. Avoid and discourage guest authorship (i.e., named authors who do not meet authorship criteria).
2. Avoid and discourage the practice of "ghost writing" (i.e., circumstances where the contributions of professional medical writers are not identified or acknowledged).
3. Provide appropriate information concerning financial contributions or other support relating to the development of the manuscript.
4. Acknowledge and disclose accurately the role of each author, medical writer, medical communications agency, and any other publication contributors who do not satisfy accepted authorship criteria.

5. As required, disclose accurately the role of each author, medical writer, medical communications agency, and sponsor (source of funding) with respect to whether remuneration or other benefit was received.

C. Intellectual Property Protection Guidelines

When performing professional services, members should:

1. Recognize, respect, and protect the intellectual property rights and contributions of others, including copyright laws regarding the use and distribution of published materials.
2. Not plagiarize, copy, or use in substantially similar form, materials prepared by others without acknowledging the correct source and identifying the author and/or publisher of such materials.

D. Conflict of Interest and Appearance of Impropriety Guidelines

When performing professional services, members should:

1. Avoid conduct that could cause a conflict of interest, where possible.
2. Ensure that when a conflict of interest occurs, acknowledge and disclose to clients, customers, and/or contractors significant circumstances that could be construed as a conflict of interest, or involve an appearance of impropriety.
3. Ensure that a conflict of interest does not compromise legitimate interests of an employee, employer, client, customer, or contractor, nor influence and/or interfere with professional judgments.
4. Refrain from offering or accepting inappropriate payments, gifts, or other forms of compensation or benefits in order to secure work, or which are intended to influence professional judgment.