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Institut National de Santé Publique, d'Épidémiologie Clinique et de Toxicologie

# CODE OF CONDUCT

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JULY 2020

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## PURPOSE, OBJECTIVE, AND SCOPE

### ARTICLE 1: PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to help INSPECT-LB members to effectively identify, disclose, and manage any actual, potential, or perceived code of conduct violations to protect the integrity of research and manage risk.

### ARTICLE 2: OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

INSPECT-LB aims to ensure that members are aware of their obligations to honor their signed oath and disclose any conflicts of interest they may have. Complying with this policy would ensure they effectively manage those conflicts of interest. This policy applies to all members of INSPECT-LB.

## OATH OF INSPECT-LB MEMBERS

### ARTICLE 3: CONDUCTING RESEARCH

INSPECT-LB members should conduct research within the group according to recognized Good Research Practice and ethical principles, to the best of their knowledge. They acknowledge that they are a part of an international community of researchers. They shall conduct their research honestly and truthfully and show respect for humans, animals, and nature. They shall use their knowledge and skills to the best of their judgment for the good of humanity and sustainable development. They shall not allow interests based on ideology, religion, ethnicity, prejudice, or material advantages to overshadow their ethical responsibility as researchers. They will move away from any research misconduct, including:

- Data manipulation;
- Data fabrication or falsification;
- Plagiarism;
- Concealment of detrimental effects of an intervention;
- Offering gift or ghost authorship;
- Denying other contributors their right as potential authors;
- Trying to bias refereeing;
- Duplicating publications.

Also, members will not overlook research malpractice and will not bias quality assessment. They will try to refrain from working on topics in which they may have a conflict of interest, and will not hide any potential conflict of interest to readers (if any).

Members will apply their scientific skills and principles to benefit society and will continue to practice and support scientific processes based on logic, intellectual rigor, personal integrity, and uncompromising respect for truth. They will treat their colleagues' work with respect and objectivity and will convey these scientific principles in their profession, while mentoring, and in public debate. Finally, members will seek to increase public understanding of the principles of science and its humanitarian goals.

### ARTICLE 4: DEFINITION OF CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS (COI)

A conflict of interest (COI) occurs when a person's interests conflict with their responsibility to act according to ethical principles. Personal interests include direct interests as well as those of family,

friends, or other organisations a person may be involved with or have an interest in (financial or other). It also includes a conflict between a member's duty to the group and another duty that the member has, for example, to another association. A COI may be actual, potential, or perceived and may be financial or non-financial.

These situations present the risk that a person will make a decision based on, or affected by, these influences, rather than according to ethical principles, and must be managed accordingly.

## **POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

### **ARTICLE 5: BACKGROUND**

This policy has been developed to avoid oath violations. Because conflicts of interest commonly arise, they do not present a problem if they are openly and effectively managed.

According to the policy of INSPECT-LB, INSPECT-LB administration has the responsibility to avoid ethical, legal, financial, or other conflicts, and that any such conflicts (where they do arise) do not conflict with the members' obligations.

### **ARTICLE 6: RESPONSIBILITY OF THE INSPECT-LB ADMINISTRATORS**

INSPECT-LB administrators are responsible for:

- Establishing a procedure for identifying and managing oath violations.
- Establishing a procedure for identifying, disclosing, and managing conflicts of interest.
- Monitoring compliance with this policy.
- Reviewing this policy regularly to ensure that it is operating effectively.

INSPECT-LB administrators will manage conflicts of interest by requiring members to:

- Avoid conflicts of interest where possible.
- Identify and disclose any conflicts of interest.
- Manage cautiously any conflicts of interest.
- Follow this policy and respond to any breaches.

### **ARTICLE 7: IDENTIFYING AND DISCLOSING OATH VIOLATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Once an actual, potential, or perceived oath violation or conflict of interest is identified, it must be raised with the administrators and entered into the administration ethical register. The board should refer to governance standards to ensure that proper management is applied.

INSPECT-LB advisor has the responsibility to keep the ethical register and record information related to an oath violation or a conflict of interest (including the nature and extent of the problem and any steps taken to address it).

### **ARTICLE 8: CONFIDENTIALITY OF DISCLOSURES**

Only INSPECT-LB administrators will have access to the disclosed information.

## **SANCTION MEASURES**

### **ARTICLE 9: NON-COMPLIANCE**

If INSPECT-LB administrators have a reason to believe that a member subject to the above policy has failed to comply with it, they will investigate the circumstances. If INSPECT-LB administrators find that this person has violated the oath or failed to disclose a conflict of interest, they may take action against the offender. Sanction measures may include seeking to terminate their membership.

**ARTICLE 10: ACTION REQUIRED**

Once the violation of oath or conflict of interest has been appropriately identified, INSPECT-LB administrators (excluding the member in relation with the violation) must decide whether or not the offender is allowed to:

- Attend the debate,
- Participate in the debate, if allowed to attend
- Vote on the matter.

In exceptional circumstances, such as significant violations, likely to prevent a member from regularly participating in discussions, the administrators should consider whether it is appropriate for the offender to resign from the INSPECT-LB.

**ARTICLE 11: CONSIDERATIONS TO TAKE ACTION**

Based on INSPECT-LB regulations and resources, INSPECT-LB administrators will consider:

- The seriousness of the oath violation.
- The extent to which this violation appears to be inappropriate conduct, thereby undermining the reputation of INSPECT-LB.
- Whether the conflict needs to be avoided or only documented.
- Whether the conflict will realistically compromise the disclosing person's ability to participate impartially in decision-making.

The approval of any action requires the agreement of at least a majority of INSPECT-LB administrators (excluding any conflicted member/s) who are present and voting at the meeting.

INSPECT-LB Advisor will record the action and result of the voting in the minutes of the meeting and the ethical register.