Editors' reply to P. K. Garg and B. K. Jain: "Conflict of interest: a long way ahead"

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We thank Dr. Garg and Dr. Jain for their timely and appropriate remarks. We entirely agree with the content of their letter [1]. Until recently, *Techniques in Coloproctology* did not have any mandatory policy for conflict of interest, and it was left to the discretion of the editors to request one when the article implied the use of a device or where any issue of financial interest was perceived. This leads inevitably to errors and oversights, as the authors have correctly pointed out. As of July 2011, this policy has changed as we introduced a mandatory conflict of interest statement that has to be signed and uploaded with every article, including editorials and letters, in order to proceed with the submission.

Advocating transparency in the difficult relationship between the medical community and the industry has been at the core of our journal for many years. As Dr. Madoff has pointed out in an invited letter on the topic of medical

ethics, manipulation of the literature because of financial interests or any other personal gain poses two serious threats: misinformation that can lead to patient harm and loss of credibility in medical research, which neither doctors, nor industry, nor society itself can afford [2]. We therefore welcome the comments of Dr. Garg and Dr. Jain and encourage other readers to submit their contribution on ethical challenges in medicine and science.

Conflict of interest None.

References

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2. Kodner IJ, Madoff RD, Boffi F (2009) Innovations in colorectal surgery. *Tech Coloproctol* 13:167–169

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