



Transparency policy on receiving funding from external bodies to create new content

Background

The BMJ Knowledge Centre produces independent and evidence-based resources that help healthcare professionals improve the care that they provide.

These resources are in the fields of online learning, clinical decision support and assessment or exam revision (BMJ Learning, BMJ Best Practice, BMJ OnExamination, Research to Publication and PACK).

The BMJ Knowledge Centre upholds the values of the BMJ. These values are as follows:

- Proud of our people - Our people are motivated to achieve our vision. We develop talent and celebrate success
- Independent, courageous and unbiased - Improving healthcare requires independent and unbiased information, even if this means challenging perceived wisdom
- Patient-centered and customer-focused - Patients, customers and users are at the heart of everything we do
- Evidence-based - The best decisions depend on the best evidence
- Transparent, open and trusted - We create trust by being transparent and open

Transparency is a core value at BMJ. We create trust by being transparent and open with our users, customers and authors – so that they all know as much about the background to each other's work as possible. Patients expect transparency also. We create trust through actions such as declaring competing interests and explaining the role of the bodies that fund content (if and when this occurs). We want to ensure that our guidelines are consistent with those of the Committee on Publication Ethics, the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors and the World Association of Medical Editors.

Funding of content by external bodies

The content on BMJ Learning, BMJ Best Practice, BMJ OnExamination, PACK, and BMJ Research to Publication is produced to help healthcare professionals learn, make decisions, assess their knowledge and revise for exams.

In developing our modules, topics and questions, we have consulted practising clinicians, contributors, peer reviewers, users and patients - with the aim of covering all of the most clinically important topics. We also look at new and emerging curricula and aim to produce content that is mapped to important curricula.

Occasionally, external bodies provide funding to enable the creation of new content. This has happened in the past when Epocrates has funded us to produce new content that would help healthcare professionals improve care in clinical areas which BMJ Best Practice did not cover (for example heparin-induced thrombocytopenia). We have also received funding from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence to create learning modules.

The BMJ Knowledge Centre will operate a policy of strict transparency about any external sources of funding for the creation of content. We should expect the same level of transparency

from ourselves as we would expect from our contributors and peer reviewers when we ask them to declare competing interests.

We receive funding because we have excellent processes for creating content and also a strong brand. We must protect our brand by protecting the foundations on which it is built – one of these foundations is transparency.

Policy

BMJ will publish a statement that makes clear any funding that it received for the creation of new content.

The statement will be worded as follows:

"Between [date x] and [date y], BMJ received funding from [external funder] for the creation of this topic/module. BMJ retained full editorial control of the creation, peer review, editing and publication of the topic/module."

This statement will be published on the modules or topics. We will add dates - as most funding is time-limited. The statement should remain live on the content for as long as the funding continues and for five years after the end of the funding. We will also add this statement on the product.

A transparency statement must be transparent – it must mention the funder.

Where the content is translated, the statement will also need to be translated into the relevant language.

If we were to receive funding to translate or host content, then we would publish a statement to that effect on the product.

We will make clear to any funders that we will publish this statement on the content. We will make this clear before any contract is signed and will ensure that it is mentioned and upheld in any contract.

BMJ will only accept funding for content that is aligned with our values.

BMJ will only create content that will help healthcare professionals improve the care that they provide to patients.

BMJ will decide on the form of words to be used in any transparency statement.

In the event of disagreement with any funder with regard to a transparency statement, BMJ will have the final say on how to resolve this disagreement.

In the event of unforeseen questions that are not addressed in this policy, the underlying value of being fully transparent will govern our decision making process and any resultant actions. We will explain our decisions.

We encourage open debate, comment, criticism and correction of all our policies. We will update this policy as often as we need to. Please contact us if you feel there is anything missing.