

International Headache Society

Ethics Committee Report September 2025

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San Francisco, California, USA

Outline

- Ethics Committee Aims
- Recent Ethics committee activities
- IHS Conflict of Interest policy
- Ethics committee page on website
- Composition of the Ethics Committee

IHS Ethics Committee Aims

Identify, interpret, and manage current challenging ethical issues pertaining to headache medicine at three levels:

1: Headache patients and their families

To promote the welfare of people with headache disorders by publishing advice, guidance and recommendations on ethical issues relevant to research, practice and treatment of headache disorders

2: Headache Treatment and Research

To draft statements which will bring the relevant ethical concerns in the field of headache medicine to the attention of governments, the medical and allied professions, the pharmaceutical and insurance industries, lay and charitable organizations and any other relevant parties

3. IHS Membership and Organization Activities

To address ethical concerns of International Headache Society members regarding IHS activities, and to initiate reviews of IHS activities that raise ethical concerns that are referred to or identified by IHS Ethics Committee

Recent activities of Ethics Committee -1

- Vetting IHS Board of Trustees conflicts of interest
 - Not on industry Boards of Directors
 - No ownership of stock or options in medical companies
- 2 BoT members found to have manageable COI and recommendations were made

Recent activities of Ethics Committee - 2

- Reviewing IHC program and layout - goals
 - Separation of industry-designed programs from main courses and presentations
 - Speakers' management of COI including full disclosures
 - Limiting industry presentations by speakers to 1 each
- Separation challenging due to the physical layout of the venue and safety regulations – should be assessed on site and remediated as possible
- Speakers' COI not fully vetted due to numbers – relying on honor system in terms of disclosures and personal COI management

Recent activities of Ethics Committee - 3

- One ethics complaint by a member regarding IHC speaker selection
- Matter resolved by executive committee
- Action item – guidelines for speaker selection to be reiterated at next BoT meeting

To find COI Policy: ihs-headache.org → About Us → Articles and policies → COI policy

Conflict of Interest policy

A responsible and productive alliance with pharmaceutical and other medical technology companies (“industry”) is both possible and desirable in pursuit of our organisation’s goals. However, there are areas in which conflicts of interest, or the perception of such conflicts, may arise. These areas generally involve the potential for bias in our policies, educational programmes, and research. In order to minimise this potential, we endorse the following guidelines:

General

1. IHS shall maintain complete control over its policies. To this end, no representatives of pharmaceutical or medical device companies will participate in formulating or revising these policies.
2. IHS will strive to provide a balanced impartial view of data pertaining to commercial products. IHS will not endorse specific products.
3. IHS will establish industry-sponsored programs only when they align entirely with the IHS’s missions.
4. IHS will make reasonable efforts to use multiple industry sponsors for sponsored programmes.
5. Corporate roundtables are acceptable as long as round table members do not exercise control over or otherwise dictate any aspect of IHS policy or its programmes

Ethics Committee page – needs some updating: courses planned and new committee chair and composition

About IHS

Meet the President

IHS Board of Trustees

Standing Committees

> Cephalalgia Editorial

> Child and Adolescent

> Classification

> Clinical Trials

> Communications

> Education

> Ethics

> Leadership and development

Ethics

Aims

The Mission of the Ethics Committee of the International Headache Society is to identify, interpret, and manage current challenging ethical issues pertaining to headache medicine at three levels:

1. Headache sufferers

- To promote the welfare of headache sufferers by publishing advice, guidance and recommendations on ethical issues relevant to research, practice and treatment of headache disorders

2. Headache treatment and research organisations

- To draft statements which will bring the relevant ethical concerns in the field of headache medicine to the attention of governments, the medical and allied professions, the pharmaceutical and insurance industries, lay and charitable organisations and any other relevant parties

3. IHS membership and organisation activities

- To address ethical concerns of International Headache Society members regarding IHS activities
- To initiate reviews of IHS activities that raise ethical concerns that are referred to or identified by IHS Ethics Committee

IHS Ethics Committee members

- Dr Mo Levin is outgoing chair with Dr Tom Ward assuming role as of the IHC meeting in Sao Paulo – Committee members and meetings to be determined in future. Current members:

- Mo Levin – USA



- Stefan Evers – Germany



- Bronwyn Jenkins – Australia



- Tina Charway-Felli – Ghana



- Tom Ward – USA

