

Disclosures of conflicts of interest in oral presentations at an international gastroenterology conference

Ethan X Tan¹, Ziheng C Xu¹, Mayur Garg^{1,2}, Robert Little^{1,3}

1. Department of Gastroenterology, Northern Health, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
2. Department of Medicine, The University of Melbourne, Parkville, Victoria, Australia
3. Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, Monash University, Clayton, Victoria, Australia

Northern Health



RESEARCH WEEK
20-24 OCTOBER 2025
INSPIRED RESEARCHERS
Northern Health

Introduction

- Conflicts of interest (COI) introduce potential bias into study design, scientific interpretation, clinician prescribing patterns and guideline development
- Financial ties between healthcare professionals and pharmaceutical industry should be openly disclosed in research communication according to guidelines provided by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE)
- Our aim was to evaluate the adequacy of COI disclosures at the 20th Congress of the European Crohn's and Colitis Organisation (ECCO) 2025, attended by 8156 delegates

Methods

- COIs for scientific presentations recorded on the ECCO 2025 virtual portal were assessed
- These included plenary presentations (PP) and oral presentations (OP) assessed by two investigators, and short digital oral presentations (DOP) assessed by one investigator each.
- Outcomes of interest included the presence of a disclosure slide, slide display duration, number of COIs on slide, adequacy of disclosures (defined as a verbal or written specification of how a relevant COI related to their presentation topic)
- Statistical analyses were performed using GraphPad Prism v10.4.2, with data expressed as medians and Interquartile range (IQR)

Results

- 206 presentations were reviewed (33 PP, 41 OP, 128 DOPs)
 - 117 presentations (57%) disclosed COIs
 - 51 (25%) reported no COI to disclose
 - 38 (18%) did not have a disclosure statement
- Median disclosure slide duration was **2.3 seconds** (IQR 1.5-3.4), with the shortest time of slide display as **0.24 seconds**.
- Median number of disclosures was 10 (IQR 5-29)
- There was **no correlation** between number of disclosures and duration of slide display ($r = 0.059$, $p = 0.53$; Figure 1)
- 38 of the 169 (22%)** presentations with available abstracts had inconsistencies with the presented slides
- 110 of 117 (94%)** presentations had inadequate disclosures
- Presentations with adequate disclosure status had longer median time ($p = 0.006$, Figure 2)
 - Adequate: 6.5 seconds (IQR 3.5-9.3)
 - Inadequate: 2.3 seconds (IQR 1.4-3.0)
- 69 presentations (59%)** presented on a product belonging to one of the companies on the speaker COI list
- The most common disclosure statements were "here are my disclosures" in 57 presentations (49%) and no verbal comment in 34 (29%)

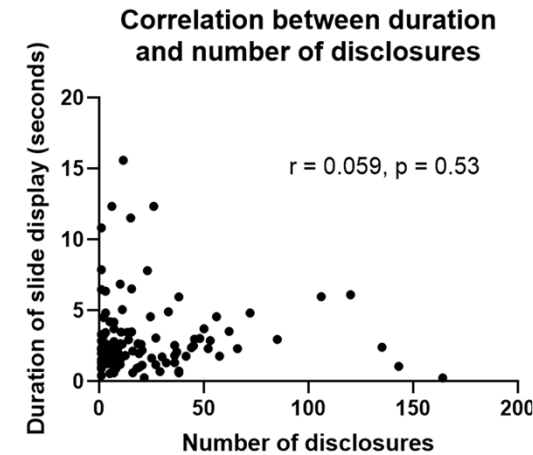


Figure 1: Scatterplot showing no correlation between disclosure slide duration (y-axis) and number of disclosures (x-axis) as assessed using Spearman Rank correlation ($r = 0.059$, $p = 0.53$). Each dot represents one presentation.

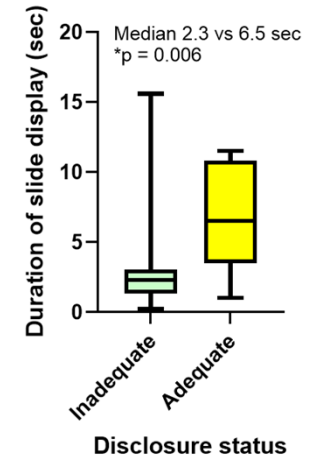


Figure 2: Disclosure slide duration (seconds) according to disclosure status as assessed with Mann-Whitney U test.

Conclusions

- Adherence to author guidelines for disclosures was suboptimal at the 20th Congress of ECCO
- One-fifth** of presentations included no disclosure slide
- Disclosure slides contained a lot of material and median slide durations were **too short (2.3 seconds)** for meaningful interpretation
- 94%** of disclosures were considered inadequate, with **59%** of presentations having a potential industry product on the COI list
- We recommend **standardizing disclosure practice** by providing a template disclosure slide and verbal statement for speakers, which highlights involvement of industries in study design, data analysis and slide preparation. This may improve consistency and adequacy of disclosures and facilitate public trust in researchers.