

Press release

A letter to the editor (*), published on April 7 in the prestigious medical journal *The Lancet*, reveals serious malfunctions in the mechanisms of publication in scientific journals of the highest level. This problem is evident in the case of the radiologist László Tabár, considered as the “father of screening mammography”.

As shown by Catherine Riva, Jérôme Biollaz, Philippe Foucras, Bernard Junod, Philippe Nicot and Jean-Pierre Spinosa in their letter, László Tabár has contravened the rules of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, the ICMJE. These rules make mandatory for all authors to declare all their links of interest. It is a non-negotiable obligation of transparency, for authors submitting a publication in a scientific journal of high level, given the consequent impact on health prevention and treatment.

László Tabár held various lucrative activities for several firms specialized in medical imaging (consultant, teacher, member of medical and scientific boards). He is also a co-owner of a patent on a user interface and workflow for mammography viewing, and CEO of a company specialized in training in reading mammograms with annual sales estimated between 1 and 2.5 million dollars. Given the clear link between his research area and these gainful activities, László Tabár should have referred these activities in his recent declarations of interest in medical journals. However, the radiologist has consistently ruled that he had “no conflict of interest to declare”.

These revelations raise a host of issues: control over the accuracy of declarations of interest, the limit between fraud and an incomplete and/or misleading statement of interest, the credit to be given to publications that do not follow the rules into force, and finally actions taken by medical journals, especially in the form of sanctions.

(*) Catherine Riva, Jérôme Biollaz, Philippe Foucras, Bernard Junod, Philippe Nicot, Jean-Pierre Spinosa, Effect of population-based screening on breast cancer mortality – Correspondence, *The Lancet*, Volume 379, Issue 9823, Page 1296, 7 April 2012 doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(12)60548-0 [http://www.lancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(12\)60548-0/fulltext](http://www.lancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(12)60548-0/fulltext)

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