



EAACI POSITION PAPER

Prepared by the Ethics Committee of EAACI

Nekam K. (chairman), Schapowal A. (secretary), Bonini S., Franchi M., Gayraud, J., Kontou-Fili, K., Marrache F., Radu J.R., Ring J., Rosado Pinto J., Simon H-U., Valovirta E., and Frew A.J.:

The Code of Ethics of the European Academy of Allergology and Clinical Immunology (EAACI)

1. INTRODUCTION

The EAACI is a supra-national scientific organization of European national societies *and individual members* devoted to allergology and clinical immunology.

The purpose of EAACI is to benefit the care of patients with allergic and other immune-mediated diseases by:

- promoting basic and clinical research
- collecting, assessing and disseminating scientific information
- functioning as a scientific reference body for other scientific, health and political organizations
- encouraging and providing (training and) continuous education
- promoting good patient care in this important area of medicine
- cooperating with other relevant organizations .

The primary purpose of this Code is to support EAACI's main goals, as listed above.

In order to be effective, EAACI needs to be viewed by the scientific community, the various social bodies, patients and other members of the general public, industry, media and political decision makers as an independent scientific society of special competence, high respect and integrity. While doing so this Code determines the moral and ethical obligations of its members primarily as members of the EAACI



, leaving place for national regulations and rules, and international treaties and declarations applicable in this field.

The EAACI Code of Ethics is an integrated part of the Constitution of the Academy. It applies to its members and officers and is enforceable solely by EAACI. We advise national societies to translate the EAACI Code of Ethics into their national language(s)

and circulate it as their official document and to make it accessible not only to their members but for the general public as well.

EAACI reserves the right to apply disciplinary procedures in cases of relevant violations, when it judges that such action serves the interests of EAACI and its members.

The Ethics Committee is the advisory body of the EAACI Executive Committee.

2. COMMENTS

All physicians and other persons providing medical services and care, and researchers have an obligation to act in accordance with the principles and rules of bioethics, with respect to their patients, their profession, their science and the society. The core principle of ethics is to respect and benefit human beings and the whole environment, and refrain from misdeeds.

Medical ethics is not a fixed code of practice, however. It has not only to reflect changes in our general **medical practice and research**

but to respect global and national professional rules and doctrines, too.

The purposes of medicine and particularly of allergy and clinical immunology are not limited to patient care: the making of an individual diagnosis, treatment, prevention and rehabilitation of the respective illness.

To our evidence –based knowledge allergies and other immune-mediated diseases are influenced by genetic ~, environmental ~, life style ~, socioeconomic and educational factors, the scope and quality of health care, and medical services. While being active as clinician, educator, researcher and advocate, one has to bear in mind all possibilities to neutralize any negative effects of the factors listed above.

Medical care providers and researchers in allergy and immunology shall uphold the standards of professionalism, be honest in all professional interactions, continue to study, apply and advance and distribute unbiased scientific knowledge, maintain a



commitment to continuous medical education, make relevant information available to patients, colleagues, and the public, and use the talents and skills of other health professionals when indicated.

Because it is the goal of physicians and scientific research to maintain or restore health and quality of life in as many people as possible,

to practice prevention whenever applicable, social commitment is an integral component of our medical conduct. The physician's personal social responsibility and the responsibility of society **include:**

A/ the commitment to a fair health system in the home country

B/ involvement in the improvement of working conditions,

C/ to communicate a fair opinion on **the distribution of** national, regional and global health resources

D/ and the commitment to a healthy, safe and sustainable environment suitable for life.

On the other hand, it must likewise be more and more the task of the society, its members as individuals, and the physicians in the society to become active **before** an illness appears. To this end, more knowledge in allergology, in the field of prevention and prophylaxis must be gained and implemented. It is the shared responsibility of clinicians, researchers and the whole society to reduce the huge and increasing burden of allergic diseases for the global and the local societies.

Medicine is a dynamic discipline. For medical progress to occur, scientific diversity and transparency are necessary pre-requisites. Biomedical research is subject to generally accepted fundamental principles and must guarantee the safety of the patient according to international rules. Biomedical research, however, implies a certain level of self-commitment of patients and healthy people towards the advancement of medicine. Research programs must be made socially lucid and transparent. The goals of research have to be worked out in cooperation with the society.

Necessary part of these efforts should be the education and information of the global society and local communities. Falsification and deceit in scientific publications is scientifically and morally reprehensible, and must be prevented and controlled by appropriate means.

To reach all these ambitious goals, all EAACI members including junior, associate and honorary members as well, shall act at all times in an ethical, transparent manner in relation to their patients, colleagues and EAACI, **and the whole**



3. specific Recommendations of the Ethics Committee on the conduct of EAACI members and officers

As a supra-national European society we expect that :

- all members of EAACI should adhere to the accepted rules and ethical ideas of their profession, be it in medicine, research, pharmacology, economics etc. This is likely to prohibit
- scientific fraud and corruption,
- investigations, treatments, experiments in humans or animals without agreement by ethical bodies, ***informed consent*** (careful information) of the patients and volunteers,
- and to promote correct and unbiased reporting of data .

Only official representatives (as determined by the Constitution) of EAACI are entitled to make public statements or endorse any product, service, person or idea in the name of the EAACI.

Any member's actions for or on behalf of EAACI shall not be biased by an economic interest generated by (some) third party. (like e.g. some industries.)

In the interest of openness and transparency, any potential and actual, future and past (1 year) conflict, whether individual or institutional, direct or indirect, has to be disclosed fully and in advance. This applies in particular to publications in scientific journals (and journals for the general public), to any form of public communication, and to speakers of national and/or international meetings of scientific and particularly of educational character.

Gifts. The members should adhere to national laws, which are in the process to be adapted by most local medical organisations. In general, members should not accept inappropriate (biasing) gifts from the industry.

The EAACI itself (will) makes all efforts to be an open and transparent society: selection processes for lecturers of scientific events , for allocating scholarships or other special funds to permit medical students, residents and fellows to attend educational conferences must be transparent and unbiased. Those involved in such selection processes must publish in advance details of the criteria used for selection



4. *Administrative Procedures*

A) Ethics Committee

The Ethics Committee shall consist of nine members altogether: eight members of the Academy in good standing : the Chair, the Secretary and six additional members, and a representative of the Patient Organization EFA. A complementary legal adviser supports the work of the Committee without voting rights.

The term of office shall be two years, co-terminous with the Executive Committee. No person may serve for more than two consecutive terms on the Ethics Committee.

Nominations for vacancies among additional members of the Ethics Committee will be solicited from National Societies and individual members. A slate of members and officers for the next two year period will be prepared by the existing Ethics Committee and submitted to the Executive Committee for approval. The Executive Committee may choose other candidates.

The Ethics Committee's composition should be balanced by gender, practice, education, research and other endeavours within the fields of allergology and clinical immunology. Membership of the Ethics Committee may be terminated by the Executive Committee for good cause.

It is the Executive Committee's responsibility to review, endorse and publicise the Ethic Committee's position statements and decisions.

The Ethics Committee shall be responsible for:

- maintaining a watching brief on developments in the field of medical ethics with particular reference to developments that may affect allergology and clinical immunology
- reviewing and assessing the Code of Ethics periodically and recommending any amendments that may be required to the Executive Committee.
- responding to specific issues raised under the Code of Ethics. The Ethics Committee is obliged to consider each case referred to it and either



investigate it or reject it. If appropriate, the Ethics Committee will issue a recommendation to the Executive Committee which shall decide on any appropriate action.

- Developing and implementing educational programmes on medical ethics for EAACI members. Activities requiring significant financial expenditure shall be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval as part of the annual budget setting process.

Elected Officers of the Committee

Upon nomination by the Ethics Committee members, the Executive Committee shall approve the appointment of one member of the Ethics Committee as the Committee's Chair (the "Chair"). The Chair is the principal administrative officer responsible for representing the Committee and calling its meetings.

The Ethics Committee shall appoint one of its members to serve as the committee's Secretary. The Secretary shall act in the place of the Chair when the Chair is unable to serve.

Meetings of the Committee

Meetings of the Ethics Committee shall be open to all individual members of EAACI. They shall be called upon by the Chair at least 30 days in advance by written or electronic notice to Committee members, and publicised on the web site of EAACI. The notice shall include the agenda for the meeting. A majority of all appointed Committee members shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of conducting business at the Committee meeting. Voting decisions shall be by majority of those present at a meeting, or voting by mail. Mail voting without a meeting is permitted where all Committee members submit mail votes.

The EAACI shall indemnify and hold harmless, and defend completely all Ethics Committee members against liability arising from Committee-related activities.

B) Investigation procedures

Any medical, scientific or other misbehaviour with professional

Consequences of a member of the EAACI should be communicated to the EAACI by the local/national allergology-clinical immunology organizations.

- Submission



A submission involving this Code of Ethics may consist of a request by the Executive Committee, for issue of a position statement

Interpreting any provision of this Code of Ethics.

- Investigation

For each submission, involving this Code of Ethics, the Ethics Committee, on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Academy, shall conduct an investigation into its specific facts or circumstances to whatever extent is necessary in order to clarify, expand or corroborate the information provided by the Executive Committee.

A Member (an individual or a National Society) or constitutional institutions of EAACI being the subject of a challenge shall be informed in writing at the beginning of the Committee's investigation as to:

- (a) the nature of the challenge
- (b) the obligation to cooperate fully in the Committee's investigation of the challenge, and
- (c) the opportunity to request a hearing on the challenge before the Ethics Committee.

- Advisory opinion

Upon completion of an investigation the Ethics Committee may develop an advisory opinion by simple majority vote, which shall be communicated to the Executive Committee for action.

The Executive Committee may issue a position statement

- upon the recommendation of the Ethics Committee following an investigation; or
- upon the recommendation of the Ethics Committee arising from its own initiative.

A representative of the Ethics Committee shall present to Executive Committee, for its review, the recommendations of the Ethics Committee and its record of the investigation. Once issued by the Executive Committee, the position statement shall be promulgated by non-public communication, for Members only.

- Sanctions

Any of the following sanctions may be imposed solely by the Executive Committee upon a Member or Society, who, the Executive Committee has determined has failed to observe the Rules of Ethics.



- a) reprimand the Member, or institution or Society of EAACI with publication of the determination but without public identification;
- b) suspension of the Member or member Society, dissolution of the institution for a designated period, with publication (at the discretion of the Executive Committee) of the identity; or
- c) dismissal of the Member or Society from the EAACI, with publication of the termination of membership and of the identity.

- Appeal

Within thirty days of receipt of notice of a determination by the Executive Committee that a Member has failed to observe the Rules of Ethics in this Code and of imposition of a sanction, the affected Member may submit to the Executive Committee in writing a request for an appeal. In such event, the Executive Committee shall establish an appellate body consisting of at least three, but not more than five Past Presidents of the EAACI who did not participate in the Ethics Committee's investigation or in the Executive Committee's determination.

The appellate body shall conduct and complete the appeal within ninety days after receipt of the request for an appeal. The purpose of the appeal shall be to provide an objective review of the original challenge, the investigation and recommendation of the Ethics Committee, and the determination of the Executive Committee.

The decision of the appellate body, including a statement of the reasons for the decision, shall be reported to the General Assembly. The decision shall be binding upon every member and institution of the EAACI .

Version of 12 June 2006, Vienna