

Appendix 2 (as supplied by authors): Expression of concern to and reply from Professors Kanis and McCloskey

We expressed our concerns regarding the lack of transparency and availability of the FRAX equations to Professors Kanis and McCloskey and received a following response: “The equations for computing probabilities are published variously in the technical report and independent publications. The tool and numerical data have been made available under confidentiality agreements. Examples include reviews by the FDA, NICE and bone density manufacturers.” However, no single resource exists in the public domain that describes the FRAX[®] equations in sufficient detail to allow independent investigators to conduct the all-important external validation. Furthermore, as FRAX[®] is continually updated (currently version 3.8) with new equations for countries (58 models for 53 countries) frequently being released, it is important that all details, including the full model, of these updated and new models are released in the public domain.

When inquired about the issue of the competing interest of the editor of *Osteoporosis International* being an author in his own journal, Professors Kanis and McCloskey responded as follows: “There are two Editors in Chief for *Osteoporosis International*. It is standard operating practice that articles with one editor as the author sends all papers to the alternate office (in this case the New York office) and this is reviewed independently without knowledge of the other editor”. We were pleased to receive this response but we still note no mention of this kind of practice in these FRAX[®] publications.

When asked why they declared “no conflicts of interest” in many articles, they replied: “With regard to FRAX we have no competing interests. Financial interests of FRAX are the property of the International Osteoporosis Foundation.” However, the standard form for declaring competing interests issued by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors requests disclosure “...of all sources of revenue paid (or promised to be paid) directly to you or your institution...”. We here differ with our interpretation of potential conflicts of interest, as John Kanis is the President of the International Osteoporosis Foundation (IOF) and Eugene McCloskey is Chair of the ISCD/IOF FRAX[®] Clinical Task Force. We note that Prof. Kanis recently co-authored a paper pinpointing the need for a transparent and ethical relationship between academic scientists and the pharmaceutical industry.¹ We reminded Professors Kanis and McCloskey of the paper and they responded by stating “We believe that the guideline has been followed”.

Reference

1. Bruyere O, Kanis JA, Ibar-Abadie ME, et al. The need for a transparent, ethical, and successful relationship between academic scientists and the pharmaceutical industry: a view of the Group for the Respect of Ethics and Excellence in Science (GREES). *Osteoporos Int* 2010;21:713-22.