



Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Kardiologie
Société Suisse de Cardiologie
Società Svizzera di Cardiologia
Swiss Society of Cardiology

Ethical standards for the Swiss Society of Cardiology (SSC-SGK)

The SSC-SGK is active in many fields where ethical problems may manifest themselves. This short guideline addresses the most important instances.

1. Patient care

The ethics of patient care are described in the professional code of conduct (Standesordnung, <https://www.fmh.ch/files/pdf7/standesordnung-fmh.pdf>) published by the Swiss Medical Association (FMH). Every member of the SSC-SGK has to adhere to this code of conduct. The SSC-SGK has no specific responsibility in these matters. However, the SSC-SGK may consider whether actions are required when a member or trainee is suspected of inappropriate behaviour (see Appropriate Actions). Furthermore, the SSC-SGK may get involved in or initiate general discussions on the ethical standards that govern patient care.

2. Research

The ethics of clinical research are described by the rules for Good Clinical Practice (Declaration of Helsinki), the ethics of experimental research are described in the rules for Good Laboratory Practice. The research must be submitted to and approved by the regional or national Medical Ethics Committee or Committee for Animal Welfare. The SSC-SGK has no specific responsibility in these matters. However, the SSC-SGK may consider whether actions are required when a member or trainee is suspected of inappropriate behavior (see Appropriate Actions).

3. Publications / Congresses

The journal editors and scientific committees for publications / congresses of the SSC-SGK have to adhere to the high standards as specified by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (<http://www.icmje.org>). Declarations of conflicts of interest of both authors and reviewers are mandatory. If improper research conduct, scientific fraud or plagiarism is detected after publication appropriate action should be taken including retraction of a publication.

4. Medical education

Continuous medical education is mandatory to keep cardiologists up to date. It is also in the interest of medical industries to inform the cardiology community on new developments and to promote the use of their products to the advantage of better patient care. The guidelines to ensure unbiased presentations and transparency of any relations between lecturers or organizers of educational meetings and congresses and industry from the Swiss Academy of the Medical Sciences (SAMW, www.samw.ch/richtlinien) are mandatory and part of the SSC-SGK regulations



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(https://www.swisscardio.ch/DOCS_PUBLIC/Reglemente_Statuten/KongressFinanzReglement_2020_D.pdf).

5. Finances

Financial misconduct by inappropriate use of research or hospital funds or by attaining inappropriate gains from failing to disclose conflicts of interests or fraudulent behaviour are not compatible with membership of the SSC-SGK. During the investigation of alleged misconduct by the appropriate authorities, the SSC-SGK may ask the persons involved to temporarily suspend their SSC-SGK activities and responsibilities until the allegations are dismissed. If the allegations are confirmed appropriate actions are to be taken.

6. Corporate Governance of the SSC-SGK

Decisions of the board or the managing committee (Präsidium) are to be transparent and fair. They are documented in the respective meeting protocols. Upon justified specific request from a member of the SSC-SGK the concerning part of the meeting protocol will be disclosed.

The financial regulations of the SSC-SGK are documented in

https://www.swisscardio.ch/DOCS_PUBLIC/Reglemente_Statuten/Finanzreglement_2020_D.pdf.

The association statutes and regulations are documented in

https://www.swisscardio.ch/DOCS_PUBLIC/Reglemente_Statuten/Statuten_D_F_2016_def.pdf and in

https://www.swisscardio.ch/DOCS_PUBLIC/Reglemente_Statuten/Reglemente_2016_Web.pdf.

Swiss Society of Cardiology (SSC-SGK) members and employees must follow these rules of conduct:

- Be honest and ethical in their conduct, including ethical handling of actual or apparent conflicts of interest between personal and professional relationships. Members of the board of the SSC-SGK and its Working Groups have been appointed to foster the interest of the SSC-SGK and its working groups. They may hold influential positions in the swiss cardiology community. They should not misuse their influence to promote any private interests nor to favor friends or relations. If certain tasks or activities have to be outsourced, they should not be delegated to an organization, business or person in which the delegating board member has a financial or personal interest.
- Maintain the confidentiality of information entrusted to them by the SSC-SGK or its partners except when authorized or otherwise legally obliged to disclose.
- Deal fairly with SSC-SGK members, partners, suppliers, competitors, volunteers, and employees.
- Provide members with information that is accurate, objective, relevant, timely, and understandable.



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- Proactively promote ethical behavior as a responsible partner among peers in the work environment.
- Protect and ensure the proper use of the Society's assets.
- Prohibit improper or fraudulent influence.

Appropriate Actions

Cases of possible misconduct should be investigated. Most often such investigation should be carried out by local authorities, cantonal medical associations and overseeing bodies of the concerned institutions. During the investigation of alleged misconduct by the appropriate authorities, the board of the SSC-SGK may decide according to the severity of the allegations to ask the persons involved to temporarily suspend their SSC-SGK activities and responsibilities until the allegations are dismissed. If the allegations are dismissed the involved persons are to be reinstated to their functions immediately. Any communication of suspension or reinstatement should be made in accordance with the legal requirements of the personality rights of the involved persons. If the allegations are confirmed the involved persons have to permanently step down from any official function in the SSC-SGK and its Working Groups. Further actions such as expulsion from the SSC-SGK have to be considered depending on the severity of the misconduct (§2.4 of the statutes of the SSC-SGK).

Approved by the SSC Board, 25.3.2021