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## TOO CLOSE TO CALL

**M**ORE than 20 physicians and scientists are involved in making editorial decisions about accepting or rejecting manuscripts for publication in the

*Journal*. We recently summarized this process and the contributions made by each member of the editorial staff.<sup>1</sup> Many of our editors and consultants are also actively involved in their own research; indeed, it is the fact that they are closely connected with the research community that makes them so valuable as members of the editorial staff. Sometimes an associate editor, deputy editor, or consultant may wish to submit his or her own work for consideration for publication in the *Journal*. We have developed a new policy to address these situations.

This issue of the *Journal* includes an article coauthored by one of our deputy editors.<sup>2</sup> How did we make the decision to publish this paper? The answer is: with outside help. Research manuscripts from our in-house staff might be perceived as not receiving the same treatment as submissions from others. To prevent the appearance of “insider bias,” starting with this issue of the *Journal*, we have identified an independent editor-at-large who will administer all aspects of the initial review process for original research articles submitted by the core editorial staff. The editor-at-large will make the initial decision with respect to the suitability of the manuscript for publication and will return the manuscript to us at the completion of the process as accepted, accepted with an accompanying editorial (the editor-at-large will identify and recruit the editorialist), or rejected. We will not accept an article that has been rejected by the editor-at-large, but we may disagree with a decision for acceptance and therefore reserve the right to reject an article that he believes merits publication.

We believe that this new policy will prevent the appearance of conflict of interest in the editorial process. Original research manuscripts from our core editorial staff are simply too close to call. The editorial decisions about these manuscripts will be made independently.

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