

## Correction

Harcombe Z, Baker JS, Cooper SM, *et al.* Evidence from randomised controlled trials did not support the introduction of dietary fat guidelines in 1977 and 1983: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Open Heart* 2015;2:e000196. doi:10.1136/openhrt-2014-000196

### Authors' statement:

"The authors confirm that they have no conflicts of interest regarding the funding or outcomes of the above study. The study was not funded (either in full or in part) by any private, charitable or government institutions. No financial payments were received for any aspect of the above work. There are no financial relationships with any third party entities relating to the above work, nor are there any patents (either submitted or planned) relating to the study.

In addition to the above, Mrs Harcombe receives income from writing and from The Harcombe Diet Co. and from Columbus Publishing, in addition to the national minimum doctoral stipend from the University of the West of Scotland".

### Editor's comment:

"Following comments from readers, and post-publication discussions within our editorial team, the authors of this paper were asked to update their competing interest statement. The potential competing interests relate to one of the authors of the article, Mrs Harcombe, who has previously published books on diet and nutrition, and is also a co-director of a company that gives dietary advice (The Harcombe Diet Co.) and co-director of a publishing company (Columbus Publishing) that publishes books on diet and nutrition.

At the time of submission of the manuscript, the authors did not declare these competing interests because they did not perceive them as directly relevant, as many authors of research articles have previously written books or given public advice without declaring these activities in their research articles.

The editorial team of *Open Heart* firmly believes that to make the best decision on how to interpret the research data, readers need to be aware of any potential competing interests that authors may have. We ask that all authors declare competing interests in their covering letter and in a statement headed "Competing Interests" at the end of their manuscript. For information on what should be declared, we refer our authors to an editorial published by *The BMJ*: *Beyond conflict of interest* (*BMJ* 1998;317:291–2).

In this case, *Open Heart* feels that the books and companies with which Mrs Harcombe has been involved should have been declared. From our point of view, a competing interest exists when professional judgement concerning a primary interest (such as validity of research) could potentially be influenced by a secondary interest (such as financial gain). Currently, *Open Heart* restricts requests for competing interest declarations to financial interests only.

While it is not our goal to eliminate competing interests, since they are almost inevitable, and while we would not reject papers purely because authors have a competing interest, we absolutely feel that they need to be declared transparently. There is nothing inherently unethical about a competing interest but it should be acknowledged and openly declared. We appreciate the authors' willingness to update their competing interest statement."

– Pascal Meier, Editor-in-Chief *Open Heart*.



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