

# **A Peer-Reviewed Journal's Perspective on the Release of Preliminary Findings**

***Harold Sox, MD***

**Editor**

**Annals of Internal Medicine**

**American College of Physicians of Internal  
Medicine**

# Three hats

- **Citizen**
- **Chair of Medicare Coverage Advisory Committee (MCAC)**
- **Editor of Annals of Internal Medicine**

# As a citizen

- **I want accurate information from a trusted source**
- **I want the information in time to act accordingly**

# As the MCAC chair or CMS administrator

- **I have a deadline:**
  - I am required by law to publish a decision within 6 months
- **I have a dual responsibility to the public**
  - Spend the taxpayers' money wisely
  - Cover items that will help patients

# As the MCAC chair or CMS administrator

- **I have information needs**
  - Accurate information
  - Current information
- **I must convince authors of articles to give me their data. They have conflicting needs**
  - To get published in a top journal
  - To have their work affect important decisions
- **I must have a convincing rationale for my decisions**
  - I must explain my decisions to the public (FACA)

# As a journal editor

- **I want to publish accurate information**
  - External peer review 100 → 20 articles
  - Editorial scrutiny 20 → 8 articles
  - Statistical review 8 articles → 7 articles
- **I want to publish it quickly**
  - Usual: 22 weeks to print publication
  - Fast track: 4-5 weeks to e-publication
- **I want to publish articles that make a difference**

# Conflict

- **Conflict occurs when:**
  - MCAC/CMS must publish their rationale by date certain
  - The journal can't/won't publish coincident with or before CMS's deadline
  - The author fears that publicity over CMS decision rationale will break the journal's embargo

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  - **The published results differ importantly from the results used by CMS**

# Some ideas - I

- **Rigorous peer review of data used to make decisions**
  - By CMS
  - By the journal
- **Does the public need to see the complete rationale for a decision?**
  - Is it enough that the decision makers see it?

## Some ideas - II

- **Is independent peer review important enough to delay a decision?**
  - **Want to get it right**
  - **Economic interests at stake**
- **Most of the time, CMS and the journal can cooperate and meet both parties' needs**
- **Journals want “first bite” but.....**