

Consciousness Intelligence in Peruvian Adults at Pandemic Times by COVID-19

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Abstract

Introduction: Consciential Intelligence or Spiritual Intelligence, a scientifically studied construct, more than 20 years ago, regains importance in the current times of crisis, due to its direct relationship with health, happiness, performance and humanization of health institutions and society in general.

Objective: To identify the level of conscientious intelligence, possible relationships with socio-demographic, religious and spiritual variables and their variation from a measurement carried out before the pandemic.

Methods: Cross-sectional study, conducted in the Ica region of Peru during June to August 2020. 474 adults participated, answering a questionnaire with sociodemographic, religious and spiritual variables. The Consciential Intelligence was evaluated with a scale of 13 items. Relative frequencies, means and standard deviations, t-Student tests, ANOVA and Post Hoc tests were calculated.

Results: Of the participants 35.02% presented an unhealthy level of Consciential Intelligence; 55.49% for improvement and 9.49% healthy. Those who consider themselves religious, spiritual, participate in religious activities, practice daily prayer or meditation and older adults score higher on the scale, reaching statistical significance ($p < 0.001$). The overall scale score was lower before the pandemic (lower level) than during the pandemic (middle/lower level), with statistical differences ($p = 0.029$).

Conclusions: The study population maintains lower levels of Conscious Intelligence; there are related factors that contribute to its development. This modality of intelligence is presented as an alternative to humanize society and recover human values; therefore, it is necessary to cultivate and develop it, so that it can fully flourish.

Keywords: *Intelligence; Spirituality; Consciousness; Pandemic; Coronavirus Infections*

Introduction

There is currently a global health crisis, listed by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a pandemic [1]. They are reported as of September 26, 2020; 937,204 fatalities and exceed twenty-nine million confirmed cases worldwide. In South America, Peru, after Brazil, ranks second with 738,020 cases and 30,927 deaths [2]. The COVID-19 pandemic of unpredictable magnitudes, which, in its wake, brings death and suffering, occurs in a spiritually ill society; that is, a dystopian society, with guidelines and paradigms that reveal a crisis of consciousness, moral and ethical values, which contributes to its rapid expansion. This event divides the population into 2 groups in terms of consciousness, those who will bring out the worst of it and those who will get the best, according to the level of Spiritual Intelligence (IE), from each one.

In the 1980s of the last century, a revolutionary theory of human intelligence appeared: Gardner's multiple intelligences [3]; this American scientist with a multidimensional criterion defines intelligence as the ability to solve a problem, produce a product or perform a service, which is valued in a cultural context; he argues, that it is not a question of quantifying intelligence; but, how intelligence manifests itself, leaving dismissed the one-dimensional approach that quantified intelligence with a number. It then proposes nine intelligences or capabilities considered as relevant means of successful adaptation to the medium: linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, kinesthetic-body, intrapersonal, interpersonal, naturalistic and existential or spiritual. However, it is necessary to point out here the etymology of the term: the Latin word *intelligentia* comes from *intelligere*, a term composed of the terms *intus* (between) and *legere* (choose or read). That is, etymologically intelligence would be the ability to know how to choose the best option, but also the ability to know how to read reality in the most complete and profound way possible [4].

Since then, the ninth intelligence multiple or IE, has been studied in recent years by various researchers [5-7]. Para King [8] the IE is the set of mental capacities that contribute to the awareness raising, integration and application of non-material and transcendent aspects of existence, leading to deep existential reflection, improvement of meaning, recognition of a transcendent being and mastery of spiritual states. This definition is consistent with Gardner's approach [3], who believes that it should be called philosophical or existential, since it would empower the human being to position himself with respect to the cosmos and seek answers to the great existential questions.

The IE helps to find the deep meaning of human existence and the meaning of life; has a direct positive relationship with virtuous behaviors; hence, that most authors propose the use of this knowledge to solve everyday problems, seeking a better life; therefore, it is necessary to make it operational [9-12].

If you are spirituality on a more disconnected plane from the material, Vaughan [13], defines the IE, as the inner life of the mind, the spirit and its relationship with the Being in the world, an ability to deeply understand existential issues through different levels of science.

In this context and with a more consciencial vision [14-16] the IE is defined by the author, such as the combination of mental capacities dealing with existential, transcendent and conscendent issues of human status and its connection to the universe; to develop faculties that lead to the awareness, humanization and self-realization of the truly genuine human being; hence, that this form of intelligence should also be called Consciousness Intelligence (IC) [17]; because, it allows man to reflect on himself, to see the material world from other perspectives, facilitates self-knowledge and allows to create consciousness.

IC is an innate power that human beings have to find spiritual solutions to critical situations or solve everyday problems of life and work. Like any innate mental capacity, it needs to be cultivated, so that it can flourish and develop in its fullness [18]. In health organizations, the development and cultivation of health organizations allows the training of human-quality public servants with high levels of humanization and consequently to have quality health facilities and a more effective health system.

Very little research has been done on the spiritual dimension of people, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic; hence, this variable needs to be studied.

Aim of the Study

The study aimed to identify the level of consciousness intelligence, possible relationships with sociodemographic, religious, spiritual variables and their variation from a measurement made before the pandemic.

Methods

Observational, descriptive and cross-cutting study; during the months of June to August 2020, in the Ica region, made up of five provinces of Peru, the population was composed of 850,765 inhabitants [19]. The calculation of the sample size was performed using the mathematical algorithm for finite or known populations, proportion of the population expected to have the characteristics of interest (50%), the level of confidence (95%) and the error of the estimate (5%), obtaining 384 sample units. In addition, an expected proportion of losses of approximately 23% was considered, resulting in a final sample of 474 adults; selected by non-probabilistic snowball sampling. Adults of both sexes were included and who agreed to participate in the study. Those who did not agree to participate were excluded and left blank at least one question of the scale.

Sociodemographic variables (age, sex, marital status and occupation), religious (religion professing, considered a religious person, participating in religious activities, practicing prayer) and spiritual (considered a spiritual person, practicing meditation) were analyzed. The variable, IC level, was valued with the Spiritual Intelligence Scale or Consciousness Intelligence Scale (EIC) [17]; which consists of 13 questions distributed in two dimensions: Existential Thought (Items 1, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13) and Transcendental awareness in the Back (Items 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10), with five answer options (Nothing true, a little true, something true, quite true, very true), with scores 1 to 5, items 3 and 11 have been drafted in the negative direction. The EIC has an overall score in numerical form, with scores ranging from 13 to 65 points, where the score < 39 is equivalent to an unhealthy or lower IC, 39 - 52 IC for improvement or medium and > 52 healthy IC points or higher; likewise, in dimensions: (i) Existential Thought-PE (score 7 to 35); (ii) With transcendental science in the CTP-Therapy (score 6 to 30); scores only denote intensity, it is not the objective of the overall scale or dimensions to have a discriminatory function. Because items 3 and 11 have negative orientation, they were reversed when adding the score. The scale has a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.82.

Data collection was done through an online survey, using a Google Forms questionnaire (<https://www.google.com/forms/about>). With the participation of the students of the eighth and thirteenth nursing cycle of the Autonomous University of Ica, who reside in the provinces of Ica, Chincha, Pisco, Palpa and Nazca; virtually communicated (personal emails, WhatsApp, among others), to the population under study, the purpose of the investigation, the informed consent to participate in it and the URL where the questionnaire was located. Reminders were sent to track people and motivate them to participate in the survey.

The descriptive statistical analysis included frequency, percentage and average measurements. The comparative analysis related the scale scores to the descriptive variables, in order to check if there is a relationship between them. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was previously used, which determined that the scores of the Consciousness Intelligence variable remained normal distribution; thus being decided to use parametric tests: the t-Student test, for fixed dichotomical variables and Variance analysis and Post Hoc tests, for polytomical fixed variables; in addition to Multiple Linear Regression. Test results with $p < 0.05$ were considered statistically significant. Statistical processing was performed under the SPSS Statistics (IBM) program.

The Helsinki Declaration, which sets out the fundamental ethical principles for human research, was taken into account. Participants were informed of the purpose of the investigation, the voluntary nature of the collaboration and that their participation could be discontinued at any time. The data collection tool was absolutely confidential and anonymous, with informed consent summarized at the top of it.

Results

Of the 474 adults surveyed, the majority were male (65.40%); health workers (31.65%); Catholic religion (78.48%); single marital status (58.44%); he is considered areligious person (73.21%); he was considered a spiritual person (78.06%); he does not participate in religious activities (51.27%); practice daily prayer (49.58%); does not practice meditation (48.95%); the average age was 36 years (Table 1).

Characteristics	No.474	%
Sex		
Male	310	65,40
Female	164	34,60
Occupation		
Student	74	15,61
Health worker	150	31,65
Housewife	54	11,39
Teacher	27	5,70
Self-employed	40	8,44
Armed and police forces	20	4,22
Engineer	13	2,74
Merchant	10	2,11
Administrator/economist	32	6,75
Worker/mason	23	4,85
Other	31	6,54
Religion		
Catholic	372	78,48
Evangelical	20	4,22
Christian	51	10,76
Jehovah’s Witnesses	6	1,27
Other	25	5,27
Marital Status		
Single	277	58,44
Married	143	30,17
Divorced	23	4,85
Conviviant	26	5,49
Other	5	1,05
He or she is considered a religious person		
No	127	26,79
Yes	347	73,21
He considers himself a spiritual person		
No	104	21,94
Yes	370	78,06
Take part in religious activities		
No	243	51,27

Yes	231	48,73
Practice prayer		
Daily	235	49,58
Weekly	108	22,78
Monthly	87	18,35
Never	44	9,28
Practice meditation		
I don't practice	232	48,95
Daily	76	16,03
Weekly	106	22,36
Monthly	60	12,66
Stage of life		
Young (18 - 29 years old)	147	31,01
Adults (30 - 59 years)	319	67,30
Older adult (60 and older)	8	1,69
Age, Average (DE) 36.0 (10.8)		

Table 1: Percentage distribution of Peruvian adults studied, according to sociodemographic, religious and spiritual characteristics. n: Sample; %: Relative Frequency, DE: Standard Deviation.

In general, an IC level was found, unhealthy or lower at 35.02%; of participants, to improve or average 55.49% and healthy or higher 9.49%. Table 2 shows the result by items applying the EIC. Higher scores are observed in some reagents; so that during the pandemic adults have often wondered whether life itself makes sense (3.69); they begin to value consciousness, as the most important thing that the physical body (3.58); refer to having deeply reflected whether or not there is a consciousness (Spirit/Soul) (3.47). They assume that consciousness is the basis of everything that exists (3.46) and that, in these circumstances of crisis, the awakening of consciousness is a constant practice in their lives (3.45), among other relevant findings.

No.	Questions	Media	of
Existential Thinking			
	I have thought deeply whether or not there is a Consciousness (Spirit/Soul)	3,47	1,15
	I think we're all one with the universe and we're connected to each other, in the form of a giant network.	2,94	1,23
	I have reflected deeply, on what may be beyond the death of the physical body.	3,37	1,20
	I constantly seek to find answers to the mysteries of life, the spiritual world, and questions about our existence.	3,16	1,18
	I've often wondered if life itself makes sense.	3,69	1,06
	I value Consciousness as more important than the physical body.	3,58	1,16
	I have drawn my own conclusions and/or theories on topics such as life and existence itself.	3,46	1,12
Transcendental Awareness in Practice			
	I often think of the spiritual reward I could receive if I do my job right.	3,43	1,32
	I choose the Mind over Consciousness so that life can be better conducted.	2,66	1,15
	The awakening of Consciousness is a constant practice in my life.	3,45	1,11
	I consider myself a spiritual being living a human experience.	2,98	1,26
	I assume that Consciousness is the basis of all that exists.	3,46	1,11
	I define myself by my physical body and/or personality.	2,64	1,23

Table 2: Results of applying the consciousness intelligence scale, for each item.

DE: Standard Deviation.

ANOVA correlation analysis and t-tests were performed to assess whether sociodemographic, religious and spiritual variables (Table 3); relates to the level of Consciousness Intelligence. Below are the findings.

Variables	Consciousness intelligence	Dimensions								
		Existential thinking			Transcendental awareness in practice					
		M	of	P* Value	M	of	P* Value	M	of	P* Value
Sex										
Male	42,50	7,19	0,673	24,02	5,19	0,301	18,48	2,86	0,434	
Female	42,19	7,67		23,49	5,33		18,70	3,06		
Occupation										
Student	40,89	7,57	0,023	22,95	4,99	0,036	17,95	3,15	0,016	
Health worker	41,65	7,80		22,94	5,56		18,71	2,93		
Housewife	43,96	6,83		24,41	4,77		19,56	3,01		
Teacher	42,56	7,16		24,11	5,24		18,44	2,49		
Self-employed	43,25	6,10		24,38	4,29		18,88	2,85		
Armed and police forces	40,80	8,22		22,70	6,18		18,10	3,11		
Engineer	45,85	6,58		26,77	5,07		19,08	2,06		
Merchant	42,80	10,58		24,70	7,24		18,10	4,07		
Administrator/economist	46,03	7,27		26,13	5,23		19,91	2,88		
Worker/mason	40,61	7,49		22,87	5,35		17,74	3,21		
Other	41,16	6,50		23,45	4,57		17,71	2,64		
Religion										
Catholic	42,43	7,48	0,035	23,81	5,32	0,028	18,62	2,94	0,046	
Evangelical	43,50	7,98		23,45	6,04		20,05	3,19		
Christian	43,16	6,77		24,29	4,25		18,86	3,14		
Jehovah's Witnesses	35,33	5,32		18,00	4,00		17,33	2,25		
Other	39,36	8,26		21,88	5,55		17,48	3,12		
Marital status										
Single	41,88	7,52	0,318	23,51	5,19	0,435	18,38	3,05	0,196	
Married	42,50	7,65		23,57	5,53		18,94	2,98		
Divorced	44,87	7,18		25,43	4,97		19,43	3,17		
Convivant	43,65	6,76		24,62	5,18		19,04	2,07		
Other	40,80	6,10		23,00	5,15		17,80	1,64		
He or she is considered a religious person										
No	40,41	7,94	0,001	22,44	5,66	0,002	17,97	3,19	0,004	
Yes	42,99	7,22		24,12	5,07		18,87	2,88		

He considers himself a spiritual person									
No	37,25	6,75	0,000	20,67	4,77	0,000	16,58	2,82	0,000
Yes	43,72	7,09		24,52	5,12		19,20	2,78	
Take part in religious activities									
No	41,56	7,30	0,027	23,34	5,05	0,162	18,22	3,09	0,002
Yes	43,08	7,64		24,02	5,51		19,06	2,83	
Practice prayer									
Daily	44,23	7,46	0,000	24,80	5,36	0,000	19,43	2,96	0,000
Weekly	41,47	6,27		23,11	4,53		18,36	2,60	
Monthly	40,26	7,41		22,38	5,28		17,89	2,75	
Never	38,07	7,71		21,61	5,34		16,45	3,04	
Practice meditation									
I don't practice	40,16	7,35	0,000	22,29	5,07	0,000	17,87	2,99	0,000
Daily	45,61	7,69		25,39	5,38		20,21	3,19	
Weekly	44,44	7,11		25,28	5,28		19,16	2,60	
Monthly	42,60	5,82		23,98	4,56		18,62	2,40	
Stage of life									
Young people (18 - 29 years)	40,13	7,30	0,000	22,26	5,10	0,000	17,87	2,93	0,000
Adults (30 - 59 years)	43,21	7,36		24,28	5,21		18,94	2,97	
Older adult (60 and older)	45,75	8,94		25,63	6,97		20,13	2,30	
Total scale	42,29	7,5		23,67	5,28		18,62	2,99	

Table 3: Distribution of EIC scores, according to socio-democratic, religious and spiritual variables.

M: Average, IC: 95% Confidence Intervals, *: ANOVA Tests, t: Student test.

Occupation: Statistical differences are reported in the occupation variable, these differences were significant in the student groups and administrators/economists, in the latter category the scores were higher, this means that they can increase the likelihood of developing higher levels of consciousness; however, depending on the dimensions, the differences were not significant.

Religion: While there were statistical differences, these were not significant; however, higher scores are observed on the global scale and dimensions, in evangelicals and Christians; hence, these have higher levels of IC, PE and CTP.

Religious self-perception: People who consider themselves religious report higher scores on the overall scale and dimensions, the p-value proved significant. For this reason, it is concluded that the participant's religious self-perception is a factor influencing their level of HF; in addition, in pe and CTP.

Spiritual self-perception: People who consider themselves spiritual have higher scores on the global scale and dimensions, the p-value was significant, these findings suggest that spirituality would increase the likelihood of having higher levels of IC, in addition to PE and CTP.

Participation in religious activities: Adults participating in religious activities have higher scores on the global scale and CTP dimension, with statistical differences; in this way, participating in religious activities would increase the levels of IC and CTP.

Personal prayer: In the practice variable prayer p-value was significant, on the global scale and dimensions; these differences were found in the practica category prayer daily; consequently, practicing prayer daily would allow the development of IC. Likewise, differences were found in the categories practice prayer weekly and do not practice prayer. This finding corroborates the claim that the more prayer is practiced, the higher the levels of IC; the results were similar in the PE and CTP dimensions.

Personal meditation: In the variable practices meditation, the p-value was significant, on the global scale and dimensions; the differences were found in the group practices prayer daily, weekly and does not practice meditation; higher scores in the first two categories, allow infer that the more meditation is practiced increase the likelihood of developing IC; similar results in dimensions are reported.

Age: In the age variable, the p-value was significant, on the overall scale and dimensions; the differences were found in the youth and adult group; scores were higher in adults; however, older adults reported higher scores, this fact allows us to infer that as age progresses, human beings become more aware, the findings were similar in dimensions.

Differences were not significant in the overall scale and dimensions, depending on the variable gender and marital status, however, higher scores are evident in some categories.

Based on the results of the correlation analysis, a Multiple Regression Analysis was performed. The variable level of IC was used as a criterion variable and the following variables as predictors: administrator/economist occupation, non-Catholic religion, is considered a religious person, is considered a spiritual person, participates in religious activities, practices prayer daily, practices meditation daily, adult stage of life (30 - 59 years). This analysis generated a predictive equation that included all the variables mentioned.

In the Multiple Linear Regression analysis, the model was found to be significant through the ANOVA test, $R^2=0.395$, $R^2_{adj}=0.381$; $F=24,070$; $0,000$. As you wish, that the p-value is significant we can affirm that it is possible to build a linear regression model with these variables according to the analyzed relationship. The variables that contribute to the prediction of hf were the administrator/economist occupation ($\beta=0.105$; $t=2,508$; $p=0,12$); is considered a spiritual person ($\beta=0.284$; $t=6,414$; $p=0,000$); practices prayer daily ($\beta=0.122$; $t=2,636$, $p=0.009$); practices meditation daily ($\beta=0.124$; $t=2,766$; $p=0.006$) and adult stage of life (30 - 59 years) ($\beta=0.098$; $t=2,286$, $p=0.023$).

Table 4 compares EIC scores, before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, a Consciousness Intelligence measurement was performed in November and December 2019, in 415 adults, the total average score of the IC scale was 39.19; this indicates, an unhealthy or lower level of consciousness, on the rating scale. The total mean on the PE sub-scale was 21.37 points which is equivalent to a level to be improved or average, with a very marked to unhealthy inclination; on the CTP sub-scale, a score of 17.81 was obtained; equivalent to an unhealthy or lower level. During the pandemic, the total average score on the IC scale was 42.29; this indicates, a level of awareness to improve or medium. The total mean on the PE sub-scale was 23.67 points which is equivalent to one or a half degree to be improved; on the CTP sub-scale, a score of 18.68 was obtained; equivalent to an average level with a very marked inclination to be unhealthy or lower. Significant differences in EIC scores were found, before and during the pandemic; however, no such differences were reported in the dimensions.

Variables	Before			During			P* Value
	Media	of	IC	Media	of	IC	
Level of Consciousness Intelligence	39,19	7,95	38,42 - 39,95	42,29	7,50	41,62 - 42,97	0,029
Existential Thinking	21,37	5,62	20,82 - 2191	23,67	5,28	23,19 - 24,15	0,233
Transcendental Awareness in Practice	17,81	3,30	17,50 - 18,13	18,62	2,99	18,35 - 18,89	0,690

Table 4: Distribution of EIC scores, before and during the pandemic.

DE: Standard Deviation; IC: Confidence intervals at 95%.

Discussion

The findings report an IC level of medium/lower level of consciousness; as well, in dimension, Thought Existence and Transcendental Consciousness in Practice. For his part, Sumarriva [20] in undergraduate students found a low level of Spiritual Intelligence, corresponding to this; however, they are not similar to those reported by Agarwal and others [21], in science and arts students of a Muslim university; as well as, King and others [22], in graduate students at a Canadian university. While the results of the research, show a level of consciousness gave me/lower in the population under study, we consider that these findings are consistent with the patterns and paradigms of society that we have today; where we observe, human beings in behaviors and behaviors that go against their human nature, which denote an IE, in atrophy or agony; because they do not correspond to the virtuous attributes and/or behaviors of a spiritually intelligent or consciously intelligent person; that is so, that Gonzales and others [23], placed in moderate presence, respect, solidarity, inner harmony, tolerance, cooperation, justice and freedom, benefits derived from the IE, as well as honesty, responsibility, loyalty, coexistence and teamwork. Therefore, consciousness education is essential to having HF; without a doubt, the recognition of the essence (consciousness) of the human being and the improvement of attitudes, will lay the foundation for the cultivation and development of this wonderful mode of intelligence.

Scores vary according to sociodemographic, religious and spiritual variables, no differences were found depending on the sex and marital status of the participants; statistical differences were found according to occupation, religion and participation in religious activities; however, the differences were significant according to religious self-perception, spiritual self-perception, personal prayer, personal meditation, and the age of the participants; it is concluded that the latter factors influence the level of HF; such as, it shows literature regarding spiritual variables of nature [24]. The differences found could be due to various factors that modify spiritual intelligence and contribute to its development, for example, age [22], spiritual experiences in life [13] and spiritual therapies [25].

In the multiple linear regression analysis, the ANOVA values, the t for the constant, and independent variables, as significant, allowed the method to be validated. In the identified predictive models, spiritual self-perception gives more weight to the IC construct; so that it is the main predictor variable. In this sense, as Gonzales-Rivera and others already postulated [24], spirituality is the best predictor of the same spirituality; for this reason, the IC is a construct of a spiritual nature.

Before the pandemic occurred lower levels of consciousness, this was confirmed with the baseline measurement performed months before it, the study reported an IC level, unhealthy or lower, equally in its CTP dimension, on the contrary, in the PE domain, was found to improve or medium with a very marked inclination to unhealthy or inferior. During the development of the pandemic there is a slight increase in the levels of IC, PE and CTP, with significant differences in the overall scale; but not, in their dimensions.

Although COVID-19 disease has rapidly spread into a dystopian society, with economic and social repercussions in the medium and long term. However, this health crisis, rather than a problem, is an opportunity that arises in our personal-working life and does not happen by chance, arises to realize and become aware that we have to live in a different way, within the framework of the parameters already established in the attributes of consciousness.

The IC provides the ability to discern and allows virtuous behaviors to emerge from the divine essence of the human being, to overcome critical conditions, to be better people and to humanize society. In short, appealing to the ninth multiple intelligence (IC), in times of pandemic, involves bringing out the depths of our being, the best of each; it is also presented, as an alternative, to reduce the psychological impact of the health crisis.

As for the limitations of the study, the online survey was able to generate response biases; however, a self-administered and easy-to-understand instrument was used. On the other hand, non-random sampling increased selection bias; however, the study analyzed HF, in

a spatial context that offers a level of national representativeness. A documentary measuring instrument measuring a subjective variable (Consciousness Intelligence) was used; therefore, the subjectivity of the data is present, however, it is very important as an IC measure. The few previous studies on the subject represent an important methodological limitation, however, it is pertinent to note that in discovering such a limitation, it can serve as an opportunity, to identify new gaps in literature and consequently new research.

Conclusion

The study identified in the Peruvian adult sample, mean/lower levels of consciousness; however, these levels were lower before the pandemic occurred. A correlation between consciousness intelligence with sociodemographic, religious, spiritual variables was demonstrated; the construction of predictive models of this variable is feasible.

It is necessary, to continue to develop the Research Line, because the study of HF generates new perspectives and debates in the field of science and social behaviour.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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