The word *interested* has two meanings: "having the attention engaged"\(^1\) (referring to something you enjoy or want to learn more about) or "being affected or involved"\(^1\) (usually referring to competitive, legal, or financial matters).

**Examples:**
My research group is interested in the application of in vivo immune surveillance in pancreatic cancer. As an interested party, she read the patent application carefully.

Both *uninterested* and *disinterested* are sometimes used to mean the opposite of *interested*, but which is correct? Although the prefixes, "un-" and "dis-", have the same definition ("do the opposite of")\(^2,3\), the meanings of *uninterested* and *disinterested* differ. Which word you use depends on which meaning of interested you are referencing.

In contemporary usage, *uninterested* means not interested, or "not having the mind or feelings engaged."\(^4\)

**Examples:**
Current smokers who are uninterested in discontinuing tobacco use will be excluded from the study.
The faculty member created a new e-mail delivery group for her project to avoid sending messages to uninterested parties.

*Disinterested* means "free from selfish motive or interest"\(^5\); synonyms include impartial and unbiased.
Examples:
The researcher recused herself from reviewing the grant application because her relationship with the applicant would prevent her from remaining disinterested.
Ombudspersons are disinterested mediators who are trained to resolve conflicts.

References

--Ann Sutton

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