

A dark blue background featuring a faint, light-colored world map. The map shows the continents of North America, South America, Europe, Africa, and Asia. The text is centered over the map.

# Our Complicated Relationship With Pharmaceutical Companies: Is There a Happy Medium?

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When Winds of Change Blow Hard Enough, the Most Trivial of Things Can Turn into Deadly Projectiles.

## Questions to Consider

In interacting with pharmaceutical and device companies, are we on the faculty modeling the professional behavior and inculcating the values in our students/residents that represent the ideals of protecting our patients' best interests?

What policies/practices, if any, should we consider changing?

Are we giving our trainees the proper "tools" to assist them in interacting with pharmaceutical representatives?

# Why is this issue so important?

MD's have always enjoyed a close working relationship with pharmaceutical companies for the benefit of our patients.

To survive, drug companies must create new medications to earn a profit.

Successful treatment of patients depends on the availability of new medications. The doctor controls access to these medications.

1998  
THE COMPLETE CARTOONS OF THE NEW YORKER



## Why is this issue so important?

Consequently, pharmaceutical companies try to *influence* the prescribing habits of physicians, especially when there are medications (including generics) from competing companies that are equally effective for a particular patient.

Physicians want to see themselves as above such *influences*, especially if not in the best interests of their patients. Further, MDs take serious offense if it appears that their integrity is being challenged.

W

t?

Pharmac  
approach  
focus on

**Educational**  
treatment

**Promoting**  
physician

that

care

to bias



*"Discouraging data on the antidepressant."*

# Why is this issue so important?

And most important, as faculty we know our behaviors, much more than our policies, significantly influence the future professional behaviors of our students and residents.

Thus, we want to teach and model for our trainees how to interact with pharmaceutical/device companies for the best interests of our patients, since most of our patients will need medications and/or devices from these companies to combat their diseases.

## Why focus on this issue now?

Because of public pressure to decrease the cost of health care coupled with the risk of improper professional behavior, residents/students are seeking guidance. They are cognizant of both the positive and potentially negative influences of pharmaceutical companies.

JAMA article of January 2006 addresses this issue and calls for major revisions by academic medical centers in how they relate to Industry.

## JAMA article

Health Industry Practices That Create Conflicts of Interest: A Policy Proposal for Academic Medical Centers. January 2006.

Authors from:

IOM	ABIM
AAMC	Harvard
Columbia	Tufts
U of WA	UCSF
UC Berkeley	

## JAMA article

### *Recommends:*

Reduce appearance of conflict of interest by limiting professionals' relationship with industry

Increase perception of integrity for benefit of patients' best interest

Model best practices for our trainees

2003

***Background:***

\$21 billion spent annually by pharmaceutical companies on marketing—90% aimed at physicians



# JAMA article

## *Background:*

314,000 industry sponsored events/ activities were given to or provided for MDs in 2000

Meals

Gifts

Speakers bureau

Consulting

CME

Travel

Ghostwriting

Research grants

# JAMA article

## *Myths:*

1. Small gifts have no influence on prescribing practices
2. Disclosure of financial support by industry is sufficient to ensure patient interests will be upheld

## JAMA article

***Myths:*** "Small gifts have no influence in prescribing practices."

***Research contradicts:***

Indicates that even small gifts by drug reps result in an expectation of "reciprocity" in MDs

Free meals & travel to formulary committee members associated with increase listing of drugs on the formulary promoted by drug representative

Increase in MD's writing prescriptions of promoted drugs after visit by drug representative, attendance at symposia, or receiving free samples

## JAMA article

***Myths:*** “Disclosure of financial support by industry is sufficient to ensure patient interests will be upheld.”

***But,***

Speakers determine whether they feel a COI is present

Audience often uninformed about alternate/better treatments than the one being presented

Sample of 893 IRB members surveyed at 100 academic institutions, with 67.2% responding:

- 36% had 1 or more relationships with industry
- 15% (78 members) reported a protocol came before their IRB sponsored by company they had relationship with or its competitor
- 58% always disclosed the COI
- 23% never disclosed

Source: Campbell, E.G., et al, Financial Relationships between Institutional Review Board Members and Industry. NEMJ, 2006;355:2321-9.

Sample of 893 IRB members surveyed at 100 academic institutions, with 67.2% responding:

- 65% never voted when potential COI present
- 19% always voted, regardless of potential COI

Source: Campbell, E.G., et al, Financial Relationships between Institutional Review Board Members and Industry. NEMJ, 2006;355:2321-9.

U.S. Attorney (Maryland) announced that a "federal criminal information" was filed charging Chief of the Geriatric Psychiatry Branch NIMH, Pearson "Trey" Sunderland, with conflict of interest relating to his acceptance of \$285,000 in consulting fees and additional travel expenses from a drug company without the required approval of and disclosure to NIH officials.

<http://tinyurl.com/treuk>

# JAMA article

## *Recommendations:*

1. Gifts: Prohibit *all* gifts, meals, travel to attend meetings, and any payment for online CME
2. Pharmaceutical Samples: Prohibit samples directly to MDs. Samples to central distributing source acceptable
3. Formulary/Medical Device Committees: Exclude professionals with any financial relationship with drug/device companies

# JAMA article

## *Recommendations (cont):*

4. CME: Prohibit direct support to ACCME accredited activity. Use central office to secure and distribute funds to ACCME accredited activities. Post all transactions
5. Physician Travel: No direct payments to MDs to attend activities. Use central office to secure and distribute funds to faculty, residents, students, etc.

# JAMA article

## *Recommendations (cont):*

6. Speakers Bureaus & Ghostwriting: Faculty should not serve as members of speakers bureaus. Nor should they publish articles under their name if ghostwritten by industry.
7. Research/Consulting: Not prohibited, but increased transparency required. Grants preferably assigned to institution not individual MD. Increase peer review.



# Why is this issue so important?

Minnesota, with several other states following, now requires all pharmaceutical companies active in the state to report annually on all payments to physicians, specifying:

- The name of the doctor,
- The amount of any payment, and
- The reason for the payments.
- All information is disclosed to the media.

# Why is this issue so important?

Numerous medical schools have recently introduced policies and practices to sharply reduce interaction with industry, including:

- Stanford University
- University of Pennsylvania
- Yale University
- University of California, San Francisco
- University of California, Davis
- University of Wisconsin
- University of Massachusetts

# Stanford University

***Cost to Stanford:*** It is anticipated that the following measures will cost Stanford \$2mil/yr in lost revenue from pharmaceutical companies

***Gifts:*** None are acceptable, including pens, meals, educational materials

***Access by Vendors (Rx, devices, research equipment):*** No gifts, samples, or meals from reps. No meetings with reps in patient care areas. Meetings by appointment only.

***Education:*** All residents/students/ fellows are to be taught the impact of gift giving.

# Stanford University

## ***Support of Stanford Sponsored Activities:***

All grants for CME must meet ACCME guidelines, be unrestricted as to content and speakers, funds flow to departments or central office, and industry representatives not allowed to attend meeting or leave literature.

# Stanford University

## *Faculty Activities:*

Discourages non-CME sponsored activities that do not meet CME guidelines. Use of Stanford name in non-CME or non-Stanford sanctioned activities prohibited. Ghostwritten publications prohibited.

# University of Pennsylvania

## *Very similar to Stanford except:*

Spouses prohibited from receiving meals, gifts  
Modest meals allowed and travel expenses/  
honoraria for speakers at chair's discretion for  
legitimate educational activities.

Industry reps may not attend professional  
conferences or reports, especially patient care

Mailing lists to industry representatives prohibited

# University of Pennsylvania

*Very similar to Stanford except:*

Professionals may accept consulting fee during their "1 day in 7" when they are allowed to consult. Presentations allowed if not construed as "marketing."

# University of Massachusetts

- *Most Restrictive:*
  - Prohibits doctors and other clinical staff from eating meals paid for by companies
  - Bans all gifts, from candy to medical journals
  - Stops drug companies from giving money directly to individual physicians and departments for educational programs, and
  - Places a complete ban on doctors joining company 'speakers bureaus' to give talks about products

## USA's Current Policies—Residents

**Vendor Interaction:** Each Department must establish policies for vendor interaction that meet educational needs of residents while in compliance with hospital policies. All vendors must:

- Register with hospital
- Wear badge with name & company represented
- Not appear without appointment with faculty member or invitation by Chair or Residency Director
- Avoid direct contact with residents unless granted permission by Chair or Residency Director

## USA's Current Policies—Residents

**Gifts:** Any gifts must relate to the educational mission of the department. The following conditions must be met:

- Gifts must be educational in nature.
- Gifts must not be tied to any resident commitment to the vendor.
- Meals must be modest and should not be the primary incentive for inviting the representative.

## USA's Current Policies—Faculty/Residents

***Gifts (cont):*** Hospital resources (incl. space) may not be used to offer entertainment outings without a primary educational purpose. Gifts without educational purpose or primary patient care focus are prohibited.

***Meals:*** No “dash and dine” without educational purpose.

***Samples:*** Pharmaceutical rep decides what to put in the clinic after consultation with physician(s)

# USA's Current Policies—Faculty/Residents

Free drug samples  
are more likely to  
go to wealthy and  
insured people  
than to poor or  
uninsured

*Amer J Public Health,  
as reported in the  
BostonGlobe  
January 3, 2008*



# USA's Current Policies—Faculty/Residents

## *CME*

### *Conferences:*

Follow ACCME policies for controlling flow of funds and selection of topics/speakers

All speakers must reveal financial involvement with company

Off-label use of drugs identified

Reps may not be present when patient personal health information is presented

## USA's Current Policies—Faculty

*Formulary/  
Device  
Committee/  
IRB:*

Faculty required to reveal  
potential COI

*Travel:*

No formal policy

## USA's Current Policies—Faculty

### *Academic Presentations/Speakers Bureaus:*

No formal policy for institution, but selected departments are considering the limiting of time away by faculty. For example, presentations for academic activities at other sites are generally acceptable with chair's approval.

Travel and modest honoraria acceptable.  
Presentations should meet CME requirements.

## USA's Current Policies—Faculty

### *Academic Presentations/Speakers Bureaus:*

Travel away from the institution for presentations not meeting above criteria may require use of annual leave.

## USA's Current Policies—Faculty

### *Consultation to industry:*

Must report all relationships with industry.

Industry relationships must not interfere with assigned duties.

Must report all income from industry relationships.  
Annual income above \$7500 requires department and institutional approval

# USA's Current Policies

Are we where we need to be?

Are we teaching our residents and students how to interact with pharmaceutical & device companies to serve the best interests of our patients?

Are we modeling that behavior?

- Gifts/Meals
- Samples
- Formularies
- CME
- Faculty Travel
- Faculty Consultation/ Speakers' Bureaus
- Research Activities



## Ambition

The Journey of a Thousand Miles Sometimes Ends Very, Very Badly

A dark blue world map is centered on the Atlantic Ocean, showing the outlines of continents. The map is rendered in a lighter shade of blue against a darker blue background. The word "Discussion" is overlaid in white text in the center of the map.

# Discussion

2000  
THE COMPLETE CARTOONS OF THE NEW YORKER



*"Of course your daddy loves you. He's on Prozac—he loves everybody."*