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Authors of important studies published in top medical journals have conflicts of interest that influence study results

“Conflict of interest is widespread among the authors of published manuscripts and these authors are more likely to present positive findings.”

Friedman LS, Richter ED. Relationship between conflicts of interest and research results. *J Gen Intern Med* 2004 Jan; 19(1): 51-56.

- Researchers analyzed 398 studies published in the top 2 medical journals — *New England Journal of Medicine* (NEJM) and *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA) — to determine a) their sources of funding and b) whether there is a link between study findings and conflicts of interest.
- Private corporations funded 38% of the studies published in NEJM and 35% of the studies in JAMA. The top 5 companies sponsoring these studies were all large vaccine/drug manufacturers.
- Nearly 39% of the studies investigating pharmaceutical treatments had authors with conflicts of interest.
- There was a statistically significant relationship between studies that were conducted by authors with conflicts of interest and positive research findings (odds ratio, OR = 2.64). The association was even stronger when using a less restrictive conflict of interest definition: (OR = 7.32).
- The odds are extremely small that negative study results would be published by authors with conflicts of interest: (OR = 0.05).
- Authors with conflicts of interest are up to 20 times less likely to publish studies with negative findings than authors without conflicts of interest.
- This study provides strong evidence that conflicts of interest in biomedical research are pervasive and that current systems of oversight are ineffective at monitoring this serious threat to the integrity of science.