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When the Door Is Closed: An Observational Study of Medical Journal Dispositions Regarding Industry Collaborations

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Acknowledgment & Disclaimer

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- The views expressed in this presentation are our personal views and do not represent the views of sanofi-aventis US.
Background

- Scrutiny of medical publications developed with industry involvement is increasing.
- Some peer-reviewed journals will not consider a manuscript developed with industry involvement.
- The prevalence of this disposition remains unquantified.
Objective

- To investigate the prevalence and characteristics of medical journals explicitly prohibiting submissions that have had any manner of involvement from a pharmaceutical manufacturer.
Methodology
Inclusion Criteria

• Peer-reviewed medical journals of North American or European origin (as determined by publisher)

• Author-defined selection of disease areas:
  – Allergy & Immunology
  – Cardiology & Vascular Disease
  – Dermatology
  – Endocrinology & Metabolism
  – Family, General & Internal Medicine
  – Infectious Disease
  – Neurology & Neuroscience
  – Oncology
  – Psychiatry
  – Rheumatology
  – Women’s Health

• Disease areas were identified by prevalence and sanofi-aventis US contributions to related conditions
Methodology

Data Collection

- Information was captured for each journal:
  - Country of origin
  - Reject %*
  - Impact Factor
  - Distribution frequency (vs annual basis)
  - Total Lead Time (submit to publish)*
  - Circulation volume*
  - Primary therapeutic area of service
  - Accept submission with industry involvement (Yes/No)
  - Medical society affiliation
  - Accepts (“Considers”)
    - Original research
    - Sponsored supplements
    - Solicited manuscripts only
  - Member of COPE**
  - Member of ICMJE***

*Self-reported by publisher/journal

**COPE member list indicated “COPE members 2007” as accessed November 7, 2008

***ICMJE-listed journals are not verified to follow guidelines (at all, or to degree of rigor) and non-listed journals may operate within ICMJE guidelines but have not requested inclusion in posted list
Methodology

Data Collection

• Journals were identified by database output based on disease area search terms
  – Proprietary web-based medical journal informational tool* used to identify journals and collect demographic attributes

• Journal disposition was determined by thorough search of journal website, if available, and phone call to editorial office if policy was not clear on website
  – Membership in ICMJE and/or COPE was determined by cross-reference of ICMJE and COPE member lists as of 11/7/08

ICMJE = International Committee of Medical Journal Editors; COPE = Committee on Publication Ethics

*Journal Selector®, PeerView Inc, Newton PA
Results

- 497 journals were identified and included in the analysis
- 8 journals (2%) explicitly prohibited consideration of manuscripts developed with industry involvement
Results: Disease Areas
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Not Accepting (n=8)</th>
<th>Accepting (n=489)</th>
<th>Total (n=497)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Circulation, mean</td>
<td>41,408* excl outliers = 1,692</td>
<td>7,083</td>
<td>7,591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency, mean (issues/y)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact Factor, mean</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>median</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>2.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>range</td>
<td>1.06–7.26</td>
<td>0.05–52.29</td>
<td>0.05–52.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reject %, mean</td>
<td>57.5%</td>
<td>58.6%</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society Affiliation</td>
<td>5 (63%)</td>
<td>330 (67%)</td>
<td>335 (67%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original Research</td>
<td>5 (63%)</td>
<td>473 (97%)</td>
<td>478 (96%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsored Supplements</td>
<td>2 (25%)</td>
<td>418 (85%)</td>
<td>420 (85%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solicited Only</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28 (6%)</td>
<td>28 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listed member of ICMJE</td>
<td>1 (13%)</td>
<td>78 (15%)</td>
<td>79 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listed member of COPE</td>
<td>1 (13%)</td>
<td>73 (15%)</td>
<td>74 (15%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes 2 outliers (103,000 and 179,000); excluding outliers, mean circulation is 1,692
Results

Journals Publishing Original Research

"Not Accepting"

- No: 63%
- Yes: 37%

"Accepting"

- No: 3%
- Yes: 97%
Results

Journals Publishing Sponsored Supplements

"Not Accepting"
- 75%
- No: 25%
- Yes: 75%

"Accepting"
- 85%
- No: 15%
- Yes: 85%
Results

Average Annual Distribution Frequency

- NotAccepting
- Accepting

Mean Issues/Year

- NotAccepting: 10
- Accepting: 48

International Society for Medical Publication Professionals
Summary

- Most peer-reviewed journals consider submissions with industry involvement.
- In general, quantitative characteristics of journals were similar between those accepting vs not accepting papers with industry involvement.
  - “Not accepting” journals are likely less frequently published, with less readership.
- Potential differences of note included:
  - Publication of original research.
  - Publication of sponsored supplements.
  - Frequency of distribution.
- Less than 20% of all journals were listed as ICMJE and/or COPE members.
Limitations

• Non-randomized, unblinded
• Sample size
• Potential bias by disease state selection
  – Limitations of database
• COPE member list indicates “COPE members 2007” – could be outdated list or outdated header
• ICMJE-listed journals are not verified to follow guidelines (at all, or to degree of rigor) and non-listed journals may operate within ICMJE guidelines but have not requested inclusion in posted list
Conclusions

- In the evolving relationship between academic and industry scientists, some journals have eliminated industry science from consideration by their peer-review process.
- It would be of interest to broaden the sample size, refine the methodology, and continue this work longitudinally.