No Tolerance to Corruption

Transparency-based Medicine – what does it mean for Doctors?

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Transparency-based Medicine

- Transparency is an important issue to be tackled…
  - ... because … do you think doctors are immune to influence? They are not!
- It’s not only about evident, classical corruption, receiving money or sunny holidays:
  - ... it’s also about "normal" influence by industry.
- We must be aware of this, because this threatens treatments and quality, and also clinical and ethical autonomy.
Transparency – clinical independence

- We are not immune – nobody – never!
- Gifts and invitations or grants are not philanthropical actions …
- How can we prove this:

Special Article

CONFLICT OF INTEREST IN THE DEBATE OVER CALCIUM-CHANNEL ANTAGONISTS

Henry Thomas Stelfox, M.D., Grace Chua, M.D., Keith O’Rourke, M.B.A., and Allan S. Detsky, M.D., Ph.D.

[H Th Stelfox, MD, G. Chua, MD, K O’Rourke, MBA, A. Detsky, MD, PhD. Conflict of interest in the debate over calcium-channel antagonists. NEJM 1998; 338: 101-105]
Controversy about safety of calcium-channel inhibitors
  - Articles supportive, neutral or critical about use of inhibitors
  - Financial relationships with manufacturers

Articles during 18 months

Authors:
  - travel expenses for a symposium
  - honorarium to speak at a symposium
  - support for education, research
  - employment, consultation
Transparency – clinical independence

Results:

- 70 articles – 30 supportive, 17 neutral, 23 critical
- 83% of authors responded
  69% of supportive, 91% of critical, \( p = 0.02 \)
- Financial relationship with manufacturers of inhibitors:
  96% of supportive, 37% of critical, \( p < 0.001 \)
- Financial relationship with other manufacturers:
  100% of supportive, 43% of critical, \( p < 0.001 \)
- Consistent with all types of interaction
Transparency – clinical independence

- Strong association between opinion and financial relationships.
- Financial relationships are a reality; they must be disclosed.
- It is a doctor’s duty to remain independent and/or to know his/her limitations.
- It is a doctor’s duty to strive for the best quality.
- It’s the patients right to know what influences his/her doctor.
Transparency and autonomy

- We can’t afford to be naive: the lack of transparency threatens our credibility!
- In other words: we must be completely clean to be credible.
- Without credibility, there is no autonomy:
  - clinical
  - political
  - ethical
Transparency and autonomy

- Clinical autonomy:
  - Therapeutic liberty is essential for our medicine.
  - It nourishes the patient-doctor relationship.
  - Guidelines must remain guidelines, not more.
  - To defend autonomy and remain free, we have to show that we deserve it!
  - Transparency is the only way to be convincing!
Credibility and autonomy in the political field:

- Medicine has a special place in society – it is not just some ordinary economic sector!
- Medicine needs special consideration in the society and in politics.
- Requesting respect of these specificities requires being clean, standing to our responsibilities, and actively supporting transparency.
Transparency and autonomy

Autonomy in ethics and deontology

- This facet of our autonomy is also threatened nowadays.
- Having or establishing our own regulations is important because it guarantees adequate rules that preserve our independence.
- It is also a patients’ right to have independent doctors.
- Here again, transparency is the only tool we have to defend our autonomy.
CPME Policy on Transparency

- « The relationship established between a patient and his/her physician is based on mutual trust »
- The physicians decisions in prescribing or using devices and diagnostic tools may in no way be induced by commercial factors.
- Collaboration between the medical profession and commercial companies is important and necessary.
- Transparency of relationships between physicians and the healthcare industry is required, and conflicts of interest are to be avoided.
Gifts:

- Clinical practice and prescribing behavior should not be influenced by payments, gifts or promotional material.
- Physicians may not accept gifts or other benefits from commercial companies unless they are financially insignificant and do not impair their clinical independence.
- Physicians are strongly advised not to accept free medical samples.
Meetings and conferences sponsored by commercial companies:

- Scientific and professional purpose only.
- Hospitality must be reasonable and strictly limited to the purpose of the event.
- All sources of funding for such events, and the relationships and commercial interests of lecturers, are publicly disclosed.
CPME Policy on Transparency

✧ CME / CPD:
  • Contents and material of CME/CPD activities are designed by the organisers.
  • All sources of funding are publicly disclosed.

✧ Faculties and Students:
  • Medical faculties must ensure that medical students are not subject to any influence in the course of their medical training by commercial companies.
CPME Policy on Transparency

✧ Research and Publications:
  • The content and material of CME/CPD activities and events are designed by the organisers and may not be influenced by sponsoring companies.
  • All sources of funding of CME/CPD activities and events are publicly disclosed.

✧ Consultancy activities:
  • Must not compromise the clinical autonomy and the ethical duty to take medical decisions independently in the best interest of patients.
  • The amount of the fee reflects the services provided.
  • Consultancy activities are publicly disclosed when publishing an article or a report, giving a lecture, etc.
Thank you for your attention!

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