

Integrity in Science Watch

Week of 2/24/06

Don't forget to check out our Database of Scientists and Organizations With Ties to Industry (www.integrityinscience.org).

Please circulate. To subscribe to Integrity in Science Watch or to send tips for inclusion in the Database, please send an email to science@cspinet.org.

If you do not wish to receive these emails, please hit reply and put "unsubscribe" in the subject line.

If you receive duplicate emails from Integrity Watch, please hit reply and type "duplicate" in the subject line.

Conflicted Scientists May Play Key Role at Upcoming FDA Advisory Panel

Half the scientific experts chosen for the Food and Drug Administration's March 6th Anti-Infective Drugs Advisory Committee have financial ties to Cubist Pharmaceuticals, whose new antibiotic is up for approval, or its competitors. Steven Ebert sits on Cubist's speakers bureau, while Jeffrey Borer, John Bradley, and James Omel sit on speaker's bureaus, own stock or consult for a direct competitor of Cubist. A fifth waiver was granted to Jan Patterson, whose spouse sits on the speaker's bureau and consults for a firm that competes with Cubist. The FDA routinely grants financial conflict of interest waivers by claiming it cannot find experts without such ties. It also does not reveal the names of scientists' corporate clients.

Source: FDA website, Feb 23, 2006.

(<http://www.fda.gov/ohrms/dockets/ac/06/waivers/2006-4209W1-index.htm>)

Yale Sets Tougher Rules for Big Pharma on Campus

Yale University has issued new guidelines for faculty and medical students that will place strict limits on future dealings with the pharmaceutical industry. The limits include a ban on free meals, drug samples and other gifts from the industry. The university also pledged stricter management of faculty conflicts of interest. "One medical school has attempted to meet the challenge of maintaining professionalism, integrity and public service" in working with pharmaceutical companies, a university statement said.

Source: "Yale faculty issues strict guidelines for interactions with pharma companies," *Life Science Weekly*, Feb 21, 2006.

(http://www.newsrx.com/search_results.php?search_term=yale; purchase article)

Top Scientists Decry Washington's Muzzling of Science

At a session organized by the Union of Concerned Scientists at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, hundreds of top scientists heard David Baltimore, Noble-prize winning scientist and President of the California Institute of Technology, attack the Bush administration for its "suppression of scientific freedom" by an increasingly powerful executive branch. Susan Wood, the former FDA director of women's health who resigned in protest over the FDA's handling of Plan B (emergency

contraception), blamed Congress for establishing an environment that neglects science in policy-making.

Source: Dean, Cornelia. "At a Scientific Gathering, U.S. Policies Are Lamented," *New York Times* website, Feb 18, 2006.

(<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/19/national/19science.html?ex=1141189200&en=21369d199035bd33&ei=5070&emc=eta>)

UK Scientist Deprived Data; Questions Pharmaceutical, University Interface

How much control do corporate benefactors exert over their university-based research? Sheffield University professor Aubrey Blumsohn's run-in with Proctor & Gamble suggests far too much. Blumsohn was denied access to data compiled for a 2002 study of Actonel, P&G's osteoporosis drug, in which he took part. The company also published abstracts and drafts under Blumsohn's name without his consent. "I asked repeatedly for the data, they refused," Blumsohn said in a stopover in Washington this week. He and others question whether companies that contribute financially to research should "be allowed to help write the results for publication or insert their own interpretation of those results."

Source: Personal Communication to CSPI, Feb 22, 2006 and Neergaard, Luran.

"Disputes over industry-funded medical research a growing problem," Washington Dataline, Feb 22, 2006.

Weinberg Group Helps Industry Side-Step Regulation

Environmental Science and Technology revealed this week that the Weinberg Group sought to represent DuPont in its battle against stricter standards on PFOA, a chemical used to manufacture Teflon. The company's pitch, contained in an EPA filing, said the Weinberg group is expert at "successfully [guiding] clients through...challenges posed by those whose agenda is to grossly over regulate, extract settlements from, or otherwise damage the chemical manufacturing industry."

Source: Thacker, Paul. "The Weinberg Proposal," *Environmental Science and Technology* online, Feb 22, 2006.

(http://pubs.acs.org/subscribe/journals/esthag-w/2006/feb/business/pt_weinberg.html)

Canadian Medical Association Fires Top Editors

The Canadian Medical Association has dismissed editors John Hoey and Anne Marie Todkill from its journal after a December article described the experiences of Canadian women who were asked personal questions, including sexual history, by pharmacists before being allowed to purchase the morning-after pill. The Canadian Pharmacist Association had complained. Jerome Kassirer, a member of the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* editorial board, called the action "reprehensible."

Source: Austen, Ian. "Canadian Medical Group Fires Top Editors of Journal," *New York Times* online, Feb 22, 2006.

(<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/22/business/media/22journal.html?ex=1141275600&en=2775e7f84d751948&ei=5070&emc=eta1>)

BLM Biologists Forced to Monitor Drilling, Not Wildlife

The *Washington Post* reports that Bureau of Land Management biologists now spend most of their time processing oil drilling permits and not protecting wildlife. "I spent less than one percent of my time in the field," said Steve Belina, a former BLM biologist. A BLM study three years ago found one-third the bureau's wildlife management money was spent on other things. "No matter how large the benefits are from this development, it does not justify turning a blind eye to the environment," said Wyoming Gov. Dave Freudenthal (D), whose state has had areas experience since a six-fold increase in drilling in recent years.

Source: Harden, Blaine. "Federal Wildlife Monitors Oversee a Boom in Drilling," *Washington Post* website, Feb 22, 2006.

(<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/21/AR2006022101793.html?referrer=emailarticle>)

BLM Reinstates Funding to Contested OSM Logging Study

Update: Under pressure from federal officials and the scientific community, the Bureau of Land Management restored money for a graduate student's study showing the negative effects of logging burned forest. Rep. Jay Inslee, (D-WA), among others, questioned whether the Bureau had "stopped the funding because the study findings ran against the Bush administration's position on logging."

Source: "About-face restores OSU study money," *The Oregonian*, Feb 9, 2006.

(<http://www.oregonlive.com/oregonian/osustudy/index.ssf?/base/news/113945731520080.xml&coll=7>)