

Week 13: Popular Articles

Both of the two pieces for this week discuss the ethics involved in the publication process and the biases (e.g., conflicts of interest) that may be present. These articles are both fairly self-explanatory.

a) Influence of Funding Source on Outcome, Validity, and Reliability of Pharmaceutical Research, Report 10 of the Council on Scientific Affairs of the American Medical Association

This is a review of the literature to 2004; guess what? It has an effect.

We really need trial registries so big Pharma can't just start a trial and if they don't get the results they want, bury it – and maybe start another.

IRBs should need a registry to get approval as well.

There is a mention of various statements about integrity that might be of more general interest as well:

CONSORT – Consolidated Standards for Reporting of Trials Group

QUOROM – Quality of meta-analyses of RCTs (Randomized Clinical Trials)

MOOSE – Observational studies

STARD – Assessments of diagnostic tests

b) Sponsorship, Authorship, and Accountability: International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (August, 2007)

This is a great statement; very succinct and to the point

Many conflict of interest items are discussed

Also discussed is the use of CROs (Contract Research Organizations) for clinical trials rather than academic centers (as it used to be)

Question: is it ethical to use your status as a reviewer for personal gain? e.g., buying or selling stock (think, Martha Stewart); publishing derivative material quickly; and so on