

Fri 9/20/2019 6:44 PM

To: Hank Schulz

RE: https://www.nutraingredients-usa.com/Article/2019/09/18/From-the-editor-s-desk-Purported-bias-in-research?utm_source=EditorsSpotlight&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=2019-09-20&c=c+rMGAJunSmaMthxTHfnmA=#

I'm glad you wrote this and hope it will open up an opportunity for an ongoing conversation about industry-funded research and the conflicts it generates. I assume that it was my blog post that generated your article: <https://www.foodpolitics.com/2019/09/industry-funded-study-of-the-week-circumin/>.

By this time, so much evidence demonstrates biases in industry-funded research that the question seems beyond dispute (I summarize research on funding effects in my book, *Unsavory Truth: How Food Companies Skew the Science of What We Eat*, Basic Books, 2018).

The fundamental evidence-based observations are these:

- (1) industry-funded research almost invariably yields results that favor the sponsor's interests (even when independently funded research does not),
- (2) the bias primarily shows up in the way the research question is framed or in how the results are interpreted, and
- (3) the bias is usually unconscious, unintentional, unrecognized, and denied.

The evidence that supports these observations is substantial, consistent, and extensively documented for the cigarette, alcohol, chemical, and drug industries. In contrast, I only found 11 studies of the effects of food industry funding when I wrote *Unsavory Truth*, although two more have come out since. Despite their small number, these studies strongly suggest that food industry funding effects are no different from those of any of the other industries.

By this time, I can pretty much recognize industry-funded studies by their titles, mainly because their marketing purpose is so clear. I think research aimed at proving benefits is not the same as research aimed at finding out what a product might do. In that sense, industry-funded research is not in the public interest.

I am a constant and grateful reader of your and other Reed newsletters, and greatly admire the consistently outstanding and objective reporting. I have only one ask: if a study is funded by a company with a vested interest in its outcome, ask your reporters to be sure to state who the funder is. I've noticed that Reed reporters are starting to do this. If this particular omission was an oversight, it was good of you to correct it.

Again, thanks for your work.

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