

re: How drug companies keep tabs on physicians

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- *From:* frey@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx (Lurker at Large)
 - *Date:* 31 May 2005 16:43:14 -0500
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In article <1117566246.852765.319650@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>, "MrPepper11"

<MrPepper11@xxxxxx> writes:

> <http://slate.msn.com/id/2119712/>

>

> May 31, 2005

> Spin Doctored

> How drug companies keep tabs on physicians.

> By Shannon Brownlee and Jeanne Lenzer

[snipped]

> What's harder to understand is doctors' insistence that they're unmoved
> by the approximately \$15 billion that drug companies spend annually on
> marketing (compared with \$33 billion a year on research and
> development). Plenty of evidence shows that they're easy marks.

>From a patient's perspective I've long suspected this. I have Juvenile
Reumatoid Arthritis, long in remission although I take mild anti-inflammatory
on a maintenance basis. I keep myself under a reumatologists care religiously,
and unfortunately always seem to be changing doctors. When I'm not changing by
preference, it's because my job changed, or because my insurance changed. At
any rate, I've noticed a very definite pattern: each time I start with a new
doc, they immediately take me off whatever the previous doctor prescribed and
put me on whatever they prefer. It doesn't matter if I'm responding well to
the old drug and having no side effects. It's old and bad, you must use my
drug instead.

When questioned, they always find some excuse. Most often they claim that the
old drug is too harsh on my GI tract, which is such a common problem that it's
hard to argue with. On few occasions a doc has more blatantly lied, telling me
the old drug was too strong or not strong enough, and once I was even told it
was addictive! (I forget which drug that was, but it was one of the milder
NSAIDS and definitely NOT addictive.)

> Perhaps revelations about prescriber reports will persuade doctors that
> they should think seriously about how hard they're being spun.
> Physicians who find out about the reports by word-of-mouth at medical
> conferences, or in the occasional medical journal article, often say
> they feel their privacy is being invaded. They worry that the

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- > pharmaceutical industry's extensive data collection violates
- > doctor–patient confidentiality (though they can't say precisely how,
- > since patient names are not included in the reports). Some have booted

Maybe what's really needed are anti–kickback laws like we have in the government sub–contracting industry. You can market your new drugs as much as you like, but wining and dining (and bribing) your customers (doctors) should be extremely illegal. And enforced.

Just my thoughts.

Sharon

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