

## Another journal refuses tobacco-sponsored research

February 28 2010, By Thomas H. Maugh II

---

The online, open-access journal PLoS Medicine said this week that it will no longer accept for publication reports of research sponsored by tobacco companies. The journal joins two of its sister publications, PLoS Biology and PLoS One, in formally adopting this position, but the announcement might be viewed as self-serving in that the journal has never published such a paper. In fact, PLoS One has published only two.

The decision highlights an ongoing dispute among [journal](#) editors. The journal Tobacco Control does not ban industry-sponsored research, in part because it does not wish to appear biased. The BMJ, formerly the British Medical Journal, has a similar policy, arguing that such a decision is an unacceptable form of censorship and that papers can be judged through the normal vetting process.

The editors of PLoS Medicine cited two reasons for their decision. "First, tobacco is indisputably bad for health. Half of all smokers will die of [tobacco use](#). ... Tobacco interests in research cannot have a health aim -- if they did, tobacco companies would be better off shutting down business -- and therefore health research sponsored by [tobacco companies](#) is essentially advertising." Since publication in open access journals like [PLoS Medicine](#) is funded by research sponsors, "we believe it would be irresponsible to act as part of the machinery that enhances the reputation of an industry producing health-harming products."

Second, "we remain concerned about the industry's long-standing attempts to distort the science of and deflect attention away from the

harmful effects of smoking. ... We do not wish to provide a forum for companies' attempts to manipulate the science of tobacco's harms."

Not everyone agrees with the editors. According to Jeff Stier, associated director of the American Council on Science and Health -- not a tobacco-funded group: "By deciding to no longer allow for research funded in any part by the [tobacco industry](#), they're acknowledging that they're no longer able to evaluate science. It is the very role of journals to discern between good and bad science, and they're throwing their hands up in the air and saying, 'We can't do it.'"

(c) 2010, Los Angeles Times.

Distributed by McClatchy-Tribune Information Services.

Citation: Another journal refuses tobacco-sponsored research (2010, February 28) retrieved 11 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2010-02-journal-tobacco-sponsored.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--