You could be paying more for less effective medicine

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A new study suggests that weak drug regulation and misleading marketing can lead doctors to prescribe more expensive, riskier, and less beneficial drugs. "Under the Influence: The Interplay among Industry, Publishing, and Drug Regulation" appeared in the journal *Accountability in Research*.

The article examines the "ghost management" of the process of bringing a drug to market. The influence of industry sponsorship and weak regulatory processes can lead to studies that make marginal medicines look novel, more effective, and safer than they actually are. Lisa Cosgrove, the lead author of the study, notes that "the public could be paying up to 17 times more for a drug that appears to do worse than existing treatment options – it may be less effective, and there is no reliable evidence of better safety or tolerability."

Cosgrove states that "this study shows that the design choices and interpretive strategies employed by researchers with industry ties gives prescribers the impression that a "new" antidepressant is safe, effective, and well tolerated, when in fact the data were not collected or analyzed in a way that provides sound support for this conclusion." Weak regulation, argues Cosgrove and her colleagues, can lead to "evidence-biased—rather than evidence-based—medicine."

More information: Lisa Cosgrove et al. Under the Influence: The Interplay among Industry, Publishing, and Drug Regulation, *Accountability in Research* (2016). DOI:

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