

Research details industry payments to dermatologists

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Connections between industry and clinicians exist and a new study published online by *JAMA Dermatology* used publicly available data to analyze the nature and extent of industry payments to dermatologists.

Marie Leger, M.D., Ph.D., of the Weill Cornell Medicine, New York, and coauthors used the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Sunshine Act Open Payment database, which records payments to physicians from manufacturers or group-purchasing organizations that make products reimbursed by a government-run health program.

Drilling down into the numbers, the study reports 8,333 dermatologists received 208,613 payments totaling \$34 million in 2014, the first year for which a full 12 months of financial data have been released. That was 0.54 percent of the total nearly \$6.5 billion disbursed and 1.8 percent of the 11.4 million records of all industry payments to clinicians. The median payment per dermatologist was \$298; 63 percent of dermatologists received less than \$50.

Additionally, the top 10 percent of dermatologists (n=833) who received payments each collected at least \$3,940 and most of those dermatologists were men, according to the report. The top 1 percent of dermatologists (n=83) received at least \$93,622.

About 31.7 percent of all payments were speaker fees, 21.6 per for consulting, 16.5 percent for research activities and 13.3 percent for food and beverages.

The top 15 companies were all pharmaceutical manufacturers and they paid dermatologists \$28.7 million, which was 81 percent of the total amount disbursed, according to the study.

Study limitations include that the data represent only a fraction of the total physician-industry financial relationships and the accuracy relies on manufacturer reports. The database also does not help to differentiate beneficial relationships from ones that are not or even potentially harmful.

"Ultimately, the impact of financial disclosure from industry to [dermatologists](#), and physicians in general, remains to be seen. Further investigations examining the impact on clinician behavior, outcomes of clinical care and patient perception are merited," the study concludes.

More information: *JAMA Dermatology*. Published online October 5, 2016. [DOI: 10.1001/jamadermatol.2016.3037](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamadermatol.2016.3037)

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