

# New research reveals that a tobacco company has secretly funded Japanese academics

June 27 2024

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New revelations, [published](#) in *Nicotine and Tobacco Research*, reveal the recent activities of Philip Morris International (PMI) and its Japanese affiliate, Philip Morris Japan (PMJ).

An analysis of leaked documents by the Tobacco Control Research Group (TCRG) at The University of Bath, shows that PMI, the largest transnational [tobacco](#) company in the world, and its subsidiary PMJ, secretly funded Kyoto University academics to carry out [research](#) on smoking cessation. There is also evidence that PMJ funded a life sciences consultancy, run by a Japanese professor at Tokyo University, to build a network of experts to influence [public health policy](#).

TCRG examined 24 leaked documents dating from 2012–2020 made available at the [University of California San Francisco's Truth Tobacco Archive](#).

Key findings from the TCRG research:

- PMJ contracted a third-party external research organization, CMIC, to secretly fund a study on smoking cessation conducted by Kyoto University academics. No public record of PMJ's funding or involvement in this study was found.
- PMJ paid life sciences consultancy, FTI-Innovations, ¥3,000,000 (approx. £20,000) a month between 2014 and 2019 to conduct various [science](#)-related tasks, such as networking with scientists and promoting PMI's science and products at academic events. This arrangement was kept secret both within and outside the company. FTI-Innovations is run by a professor at Tokyo University.

Dr. Sophie Braznell, author of the paper, said, "Despite claiming to conduct transparent science, PMI has been covertly funding research and attempting to influence science and policy to create a favorable environment for its products. This contradicts PMI's supposed transformation efforts and raises serious concerns about the company's research ethics. We must urgently reform the ways tobacco research is funded and governed to protect science from vested corporate interests,

and ensure the public and policymakers have the truly transparent and independent science they need.

Louis Laurence, author of the paper, said, "The tobacco industry's tactics still endanger our health, showing we urgently need to clean up science from their unhealthy grip. We must find ways to fund research that's honest and open, keeping tobacco's influence far away from the truth of science."

PMI has a track record of scientific misconduct and misinformation

- The Foundation for a Smoke-Free World (FSFW) claims to be independent, but TCRG research [has found](#) that it is solely funded by PMI and published by PMI-favorable research.
- Journalist investigations and academic reviews of PMI's science have raised serious concerns over the quality and ethical standing of PMI's clinical research.
- In 2022, [a review](#) by TCRG found PMI's clinical trials on its heated tobacco products were at high risk of bias and [poor quality](#).
- A 2020 TCRG [report](#) on PMI detailed the company's "relentless lobbying, PR campaigns and multifaceted approaches to influencing science and public health in order to manage the future direction of tobacco control."

Dr. Braznell said, "PMI continues to prioritize maximizing profits rather than improving public health. The manipulation of science for profit harms us all, especially policymakers and consumers trying to make potentially life-changing decisions. It slows down and undermines public health policies, while encouraging the widespread use of harmful products."

The study also builds on TCRG's previous research on the manipulation

of science for profit. To analyze the documents, the researchers used the [Science for Profit Model](#). This was developed by TCRG researcher Dr. Tess Legg, who said, "We cannot ignore the alarming implications of these revelations. The tobacco industry's influence on science undermines the credibility of research and threatens public health. It is imperative that we take decisive action to protect the integrity of scientific inquiry from vested interests."

In addition to the paper, the research has contributed to work by STOP, a global tobacco industry watchdog.

**More information:** Sophie Braznell et al, "Keep it a secret": leaked documents suggest Philip Morris International, and its Japanese affiliate, continue to exploit science for profit, *Nicotine and Tobacco Research* (2024). [DOI: 10.1093/ntr/ntae101](https://doi.org/10.1093/ntr/ntae101)

Provided by University of Bath

Citation: New research reveals that a tobacco company has secretly funded Japanese academics (2024, June 27) retrieved 13 July 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-06-reveals-tobacco-company-secretly-funded.html>

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