Balancing Revenue Streams and Editorial Integrity: Advertising in Scholarly Publishing

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Editorial and Advertising

• Maintaining quality and integrity of editorial content and advertising
• Balancing revenue and editorial quality and integrity – marriage or separation?
• Guidelines and principles to protect editorial quality and integrity in publications with advertising and sponsorship
• Sources
  – AMA Manual of Style
  – ASME and ICMJE guidelines
  – Principles Governing Print and Digital Advertising in Publications of the American Medical Association
Importance of maintaining quality and integrity of editorial content and advertising

- **Indifference to quality and integrity** leads to a loss of excellence, superiority, credibility, and authority
- If advertising is King
- Then **editorial content is Queen**
- This is a Matriarchal Relationship

- Although the primary function of most journals is to educate and inform in a neutral manner and that of advertisements is to educate and inform in a promotional manner, advertisers and editors share **a common goal—to influence the behavior of readers**
“The uncertain romance between scholarly journals and the drug industry has long been like a marriage of convenience between partners who became friends ultimately, not because they were very fond of each other originally, but because they needed each other.” - Robert H. Moser


- Commercial activities, such as ads, sponsorship, reprints/e-prints have provided a major source of revenue for journals
  - can serve as a **source of income** for the journal’s owner
  - with this revenue, publications can **offset some of the costs** of journal operations, production, and distribution
  - may be able to **set lower subscription rates** than would otherwise be possible
- With **ad revenue declining** in general – advertisers have produced **creative and aggressive approaches to advertising** and sponsorship that could **harm the quality and integrity of the journal**
Balancing revenue and editorial quality and integrity

• **Generating revenue is an important goal** of advertisers, publishers, and editors
  – advertisers want to sell more products
  – publishers want to increase journal revenue
  – editors want their journals to remain financially viable and sustainable

• **Editors have an ethical responsibility to readers** - to ensure that the journal’s integrity remains intact and that the information contained in the publication is valid and objective

• This includes **ensuring that advertising does not influence editorial decisions or editorial content** and having policies and procedures in place that prevent such influence
National regulations and the quality of ads

• In many countries, advertisers must meet specific criteria established by national regulatory agencies
  – US Food and Drug Administration
  – UK Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry
  – Canadian Pharmaceutical Advertising Advisory Board
  – The World Health Organization
  – International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Associations

• All have guidelines for pharmaceutical marketing practices

• These regulatory agencies have been criticized for not enforcing regulations, and a number of studies have found evidence of misleading advertisements published in biomedical journals
Research on the quality of ads

- Analysis of 192 ads in 9 top US-based medical journals in 2008
  - 18% adhered to all FDA Prescription Drug Advertising Guidelines
  - 49% were nonadherent with at least 1 form of FDA-defined bias
  - 33% had incomplete information

- Systematic review of 24 studies of the quality of pharmaceutical ads in medical/pharmacy journals, 26 countries 1975-2006
  - Majority of claims in ads were based on journal articles
  - Less than two-thirds of claims were based on quality evidence (eg, RCT, systematic review, meta-analysis)
  - About half of references in ads were sponsored or had authors affiliated with pharmaceutical companies
  - Only 28% of ad claims were unambiguous
General principles for protecting editorial integrity

• **Editors should have ultimate responsibility for all content** published in their journals, including advertisements and sponsored content.

• **Editors should be involved in** the development, enforcement, and evaluation of formal **ad policies** for their journals.

• **ICMJE recommends** editors “have full and final authority for approving print and online advertisements and enforcing advertising policy.”

• **New ads should be shown to the Editor** in advance to allow for necessary changes and to permit compliance with ad guidelines.

• Some Editors may not be able to review and approve specific ads because of limited resources (personnel and time).

• In these cases, someone representing the journal who understands the ad policies and who is not selling the ads should review them.
Advertising must not be allowed to influence editorial decisions – separation of church and state

• All editorial decisions must be based solely on the quality/suitability of the editorial content and should not be influenced by potential revenue, or loss of revenue, from advertising, sponsorship, sales of reprints/e-prints, or related commercial activities, or the influence of ad sales and marketing representatives

• Supported by ICMJE, WAME, COPE, ASME, and others

• Editorial staff must not be involved in the promotion or sale of any ads

• Publishing staff who sell ads and sponsorship (including reprints) should not be permitted access to editorial content until it is published.

• Editors should have policies and procedures in place to address complaints from readers and online users
ASME Guidelines for Editors and Publishers
http://www.magazine.org/asme/editorial-guidelines

• First published in 1982 and “frequently revised to address emerging concerns but can always be summarized in one sentence: Don’t deceive the reader.” Updated April 2015

• The Primary Responsibility of the Editor Is to Serve the Interests of the Reader

• Avoid Conflicts of Interest

• Differentiate Editorial Content and Advertising
  – Editors and publishers of digital publications should review the FTC publications: How to Make Effective Disclosures in Digital Advertising
  – Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising

• Do Not Trade Editorial Coverage for Advertising

• Do Not Submit Editorial Content to Advertisers for Approval

• Disclose E-Commerce Partnerships
The JAMA Network Principles for Advertising

- **Principles Governing Print and Digital Advertising in Publications of the American Medical Association**

- Developed jointly by editorial and publishing staff

- Used by both publishing and editorial staff to determine the suitability of advertising

- Editorial and publishing staff regularly review and discuss these policies and their applicability in specific situations

- JAMA Network Editor in Chief has final authority over all advertisements

Available on JAMA site under Information for Advertisers
The JAMA Network principles for advertising

- The appearance of advertising in JAMA Network Journals is neither a guarantee nor an endorsement by the AMA or the journal of the product or the claims made for the product in such advertising.

- The fact that an ad for a product, service, or company has appeared in a JAMA Network Journal shall not be referred to in collateral advertising.

- To maintain the integrity of The JAMA Network Journals, advertising (ie, promotional material, advertising representatives, companies, or manufacturers) cannot influence editorial decisions or editorial content.

- Decisions to sell advertising space are made independently of and without information pertinent to specific editorial content.

- Ad sales reps have no prior knowledge of editorial content before it is published.
The following issues should be addressed in any journal’s policy on advertising

1. Advertising-to-editorial content ratio

2. Advertising placement and positioning, including
   - interspersion of ads within editorial content
   - adjacency: advertising-editorial juxtaposition
   - placement of ads on journal covers

3. Separation of advertising sales and influence from editorial decisions

4. Appropriate advertising content
Advertising-to-editorial content ratio

- For print publications that have an abundance of advertising, **setting an ad-editorial page ratio may help protect the perceived integrity** of the publication (ie, limiting the advertising content to no more than a certain proportion of total annual pages)

- ICMJE recommends that **journals not be dominated by advertising**

- For print journals, **compliance with postal regulations** may also need to be considered if the number of ad pages exceeds the number of editorial pages.

- If possible, **journals should avoid publishing ads from only 1 advertiser**; otherwise readers may perceive that the journal is sponsored by this single advertiser or that this advertiser has influenced the editor and the editorial content

- The ratio of editorial to advertising on Web versions of journals should also follow these general principles
Advertising placement and positioning

• Placing ads between articles and within articles may attract advertisers, but may also diminish the perceived credibility of the publication—especially if the ads create difficulty for the reader in reading or finding editorial content.

• For scholarly biomedical journals, ads should not be interleaved within a scientific or clinical article in print or online.

• For CME, ads cannot be interleaved or adjacent to articles designated for CME.

• Many print publications group, or stack, ads in the front and back of their journals, creating an editorial “well” in the middle of the publication for major articles that are not interspersed with ads.

• Interspersion options
  – place popular editorial features in the front and back of the journal to allow for ad interspersion of those sections and maintain an ad-free editorial well for the research and other major articles.
  – create pockets of mini editorial wells and have ads interspersed between these groups of articles.
Advertising placement and positioning: Journal covers

- Advertisements **should not be permanently placed** on journal covers or serve as the cover pages
- Other options
  - removable cover tips on covers
  - around covers - with belly bands
  - sunburst stickers on covers
  - unattached ads (outserts) placed in a transparent polybag with the journals
  - these ads should not conceal the journal’s title/logo
Advertising-editorial juxtaposition (adjacency)

- Advertisers ask for ads to be placed next to related editorial content to help promote products
- Common in consumer publishing, but discouraged by the ICMJE and WAME
- ASME advises that print and online “advertisements should not be integrated into editorial content” to avoid the implication of editorial endorsement of the product or service promoted in the ad
- Ad adjacency, like ad interspersion, may be an impediment to readers and may diminish the perceived integrity of a scholarly publication
- The JAMA Network Journal Ad Principles: “placement of advertising adjacent to (ie, next to or within) editorial content on the same topic is prohibited
- To avoid the occurrence of adjacent ads and editorial content on the same topic, even by chance, editorial and production staff of The JAMA Network Journals review the print issue makeup before publication
Separation of advertising sales and influence from editorial decisions

• Specific advertising and commercial content should not influence editorial decisions and content – **supported by ICMJE, COPE, and ASME**

• **Providing ad sales representatives with editorial calendars** that include specific content scheduled for upcoming issues **invites pressure** for advertising-editorial adjacency and other attempts from industry to **interfere with editorial decisions**

• **ASME:** editorial content of any kind should not be submitted to advertisers for approval

• **ICMJE:** advertising should not be sold on the condition that it will be juxtaposed with specific editorial content

• For this reason, advertising sales staff should not have access to the journal editorial content until after publication

• However, sales staff may know about general editorial plans, such as plans for theme issues, proceedings, symposia, or sponsored supplements
Appropriate advertising content

- In The JAMA Network Journals, ads must meet the following requirements
  - No false claims
  - No implied false claims
  - Ability to substantiate claims
  - No omissions of important facts
  - No distortion of data
  - Good taste (although this is difficult to define objectively)
  - Clear identification of the advertiser of the product or services being offered
  - Layout, artwork, and format that differ from those of the editorial content so that readers can clearly distinguish the advertising and editorial content
Most common reasons print ads are rejected for The JAMA Network Journals

• Unsubstantiated scientific or clinical claims
• FDA recommended, not approved
• eg, vitamins, herbs, supplements
• Poor taste
• Not relevant to medicine/health
Advertorials

- **Advertorial**: an ad that imitates editorial content or presents content in an editorial-like format

- ASME principles state “regardless of platform or format, the difference between editorial content and marketing messages should be clear to the average reader” and that “advertisements that mimic the “look and feel” of the print or digital publication in which they appear may deceive readers and should be avoided

- Guidelines for display of Advertorials
  - Should be clearly labeled “Advertisement”
  - Have a different format from the journal’s editorial content
  - Include a prominent display of the company name and/or logo so that readers can quickly ascertain that the information is an advertisement from the company and is not part of the journal’s editorial content.
Focus on aggressive polycythaemia vera

Polycythaemia vera (PV) is a clonal disorder involving a multipotent haematopoietic progenitor cell characterized by the accumulation of phenotypically normal red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets. In some patients, transformation to myelofibrosis (MF) with extramedullary haematopoiesis or acute leukaemia can also occur. Despite recent progress in the field, several important issues remain controversial; most importantly, how to identify patients with PV at high risk of transformation who would benefit from early institution of therapy, and which therapy would be most appropriate for these patients. Interestingly, a new molecular assay accurately identified the high-risk subset of patients with PV and found that these patients have a set of genes that are also dysregulated in both the chronic and blastic phases of chronic myelogenous leukaemia (CML).

Identifying aggressive disease

Although PV has been known for over a century, major gaps in our knowledge still impede timely institution of therapy. Median survival in most patients with PV is measured in decades, but the disease does not always have an indolent course. A retrospective analysis of a large series of patients with PV found median survival to be 18.9 years from diagnosis, but studies have found a subset with a much lower survival rate, estimated at 5.8 years, an estimate consistent with the median survival in primary myelofibrosis (PMF).

The genetics of high risk

A recent study suggests that gene expression profiling, which assesses the collective consequence of various mutations, may make it possible to identify patients with PV who would benefit from early intervention before MF or marrow failure ensues. Past studies of gene expression in PV provided no prognostic information because most were performed with granulocytes, not haematopoietic stem cells. However, using gene expression profiling of circulating PV CD34+ stem cells, investigators were able to distinguish patients with PV in whom the disease is aggressive and associated with increased thrombotic events, increased transformation to acute leukaemia, and decreased survival.

A subset of patients with PV that will have median survival consistent with that of PMF, estimated to be 5.8 years.

Incyte

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Covert operative Anna Devane has seen her share of challenges since debuting on ABC Daytime’s General Hospital back in 1983. Whether it’s taking on an obsessed, raging wolf with a penchant for faking deaths, or losing the love of her life, Anna has steadfastly endured as one of soap opera’s most beloved heroines.

This past week on GH, Anna learned of a new adversary that just might make
Sponsored supplements

• Collections of articles, usually on a single topic, published as an extra edition or a separate section of a journal, often after a meeting or symposium - sponsored by an external entity

• **Supplements can serve useful educational purposes**, provided the content is objective, balanced, independent, and scientifically rigorous, and may provide revenue to publishers

• Studies have shown that **industry-sponsored supplements**, compared with supplements funded by other types of sponsors, were **less likely** to have been **formally peer reviewed** and **more likely to have promotional attributes**, such as misleading titles, focus on a single-drug topic, and use of brand names only.

• Because of the promotional and biased quality of industry-sponsored supplements, the **JAMA Network Journals will not publish them**

• **NLM will not index articles in sponsored supplements unless** sponsorship is clearly indicated and certain disclosure conditions regarding authors and editors are met

• **BMJ** published a debate on the pros and cons of sponsored content
  
  – **Pros**: they provide added value if safeguards are followed and excluding industry is unrealistic
  
  – **Cons**: reader confusion, risk to the journal’s brand and reputation, and editors cannot avoid being influence.

ICMJE recommendations for sponsored supplements

• The journal editor
  – must be given and must take full responsibility for the policies, practices, and content of supplements, including complete control of the decision to select authors, peer reviewers, and content for the supplement
  – has the right to appoint one or more external editors of the supplement and must take responsibility for the work of those editors
  – must retain the authority to send supplement manuscripts for external peer review and to reject manuscripts submitted for the supplement with or without external review

• No editing by the sponsor

• The source of the idea for the supplement and information about funding and the sponsor should be clearly stated in the introductory material

• Ads in supplements should follow the same policies as those of the primary journal

• Secondary publication in supplements (republication of papers published elsewhere) should be clearly identified by the citation of the original paper

• Journal and supplement editors must not accept personal favors or direct remuneration from sponsors of supplements
Other forms of sponsorship

- Other forms of sponsorship include
  - sales of **bulk subscriptions or content licenses** to commercial entities for distribution to or access to individuals or groups
  - **noncommercial sponsorship or grants** to support specific editorial sections
  - **grants** to support publication of journals in **resource-poor communities**

- With each type of sponsorship, the funding source should be clearly indicated to recipients and readers/users

- All editorial content should be under the complete authority of the editor, should undergo the journal’s usual editorial evaluation and peer review, and should not be influenced by the sponsors
Online advertising

• Online ads are **not restricted by the physical limits** of a printed page
• Ads can **rotate, expand, be animated, or pop up** on or under a screen without the user’s request
• An ad for a particular drug, product, or service can be **hyperlinked** to the manufacturer or provider’s website – see viglink.com for example of revenue generating hyperlink services
• Ads can be **targeted** for specific users or a specific user experience
• Online publication and technologic innovation have challenged the traditional print-based standards separating advertising and editorial content
• The general principles for protecting editorial integrity of print publications apply to advertising in online publications, especially for publications in clinical and health-related fields
Online advertising

• Just as a print reader can choose to read an ad or skip over it, an online user should have the same choice

• Online ads
  – should not interfere with the reading and use of editorial content and should not dominate the online content
  – should not appear disguised as editorial content

• ASME states, “on websites populated by multiple sources of content, including user-generated content, aggregated content and marketer-provided content, editors and publishers must take special care to distinguish between editorial content and advertising”
Privacy concerns and online advertising

- **Privacy rights** of online journal users and visitors must be maintained
- If any specific or personal information about users is to be collected and specifically distributed or sold to third parties (such as advertisers), users should be informed in advance and given the opportunity to opt out
- **Aggregate demographic information** about numbers and types of users may be provided to advertisers in the same manner that print circulation numbers are provided to advertisers
- This information may also be used by publishers to set ad rates and fees.
- Data on overall numbers of users are acceptable to share with advertisers provided that the journal advertising policy and use of such information are made clear to users
  - **Impressions**: number of times an advertisement has been viewed
  - **Click through rates**: percentage of impressions that account for a click through to an advertiser’s website
  - **Viewability**: placement on the journal webpage and length of time an ad is viewed
JAMA Network Principles on Ads in Digital Publications

• Standards for ensuring the editorial integrity of print publications apply to electronic publications and derivative products.

• No ads within full-text article pages.

• Ads on article pages are permitted, provided they are separated and clearly marked as ads - the word “Advertisement” must be displayed.

• No in-text linking within an article to an advertisement.

• Limits on ad actions.
  • Viewers will not be sent to a commercial site unless they choose to do so by clicking on an advertisement.
  • Expanding advertisements will expand only if a viewer scrolls over or clicks on them.
  • Advertisements with audio will play audio only if a viewer clicks on the advertisement.
JAMA Network Principles on Ads in Digital Publications

• The JAMA Network journals logos may not appear on commercial websites as a logo or in any other form without prior written approval.

• Advertising websites shall not:
  – frame The JAMA Network journals website content without permission.
  – prevent the viewer from returning to The JAMA Network journals or other previously viewed screens.
  – redirect the viewer to a website the viewer did not intend to visit.

• All online advertising (including e-mail ads) must be reviewed and approved by The JAMA Network Journals Editorial and Publishing staff.

• Such review includes the website landing page to which the advertisement links.
The JAMA Network Principles
Requirements for ads on journal websites and emails

- Advertisements must follow the Guidelines for Advertising Copy and must not include unsubstantiated claims

- The word “Advertisement” must be displayed

- The Web site URL to which the advertisement links must be provided to Editorial and Publishing staff for review and prior approval, and must contain the following elements:
  - Company sponsoring the Web site is clearly displayed
  - No registration of personal information is required before reaching the Web site; ok after arriving on the site

- The JAMA Network Journals do not permit digital native advertising (ad disguised as editorial = sponsored content)

- Most common problems encountered: technical/creative - ads with too much content or are too large to load properly on a journal website
Thank you.

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