

Medical Students' Assessment of Conflicts of Interest in Biomedical Research

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Introduction

- Pharmaceutical representatives offer various incentives to Medical Students.¹
- These interactions can promote potential biases in formulary requests and result in conflicts of interest (COI).²
- Little is known about the extent and adequacy of medical student education on these interactions and influences.
- We surveyed students from 7 medical schools to assess their opinions on these interactions and disclosures.

Methods

- Multi-center, cross-sectional, descriptive study conducted via 3 REDCap surveys assessing:
 - Familiarity with biomedical research
 - Perception on COIs
 - Opinions on changes to education & policies about COIs in research
- Approved by HHC IRB (study # E-HHC-2021-0302) as the lead center in addition to all of the involved medical schools.

Primary Objective

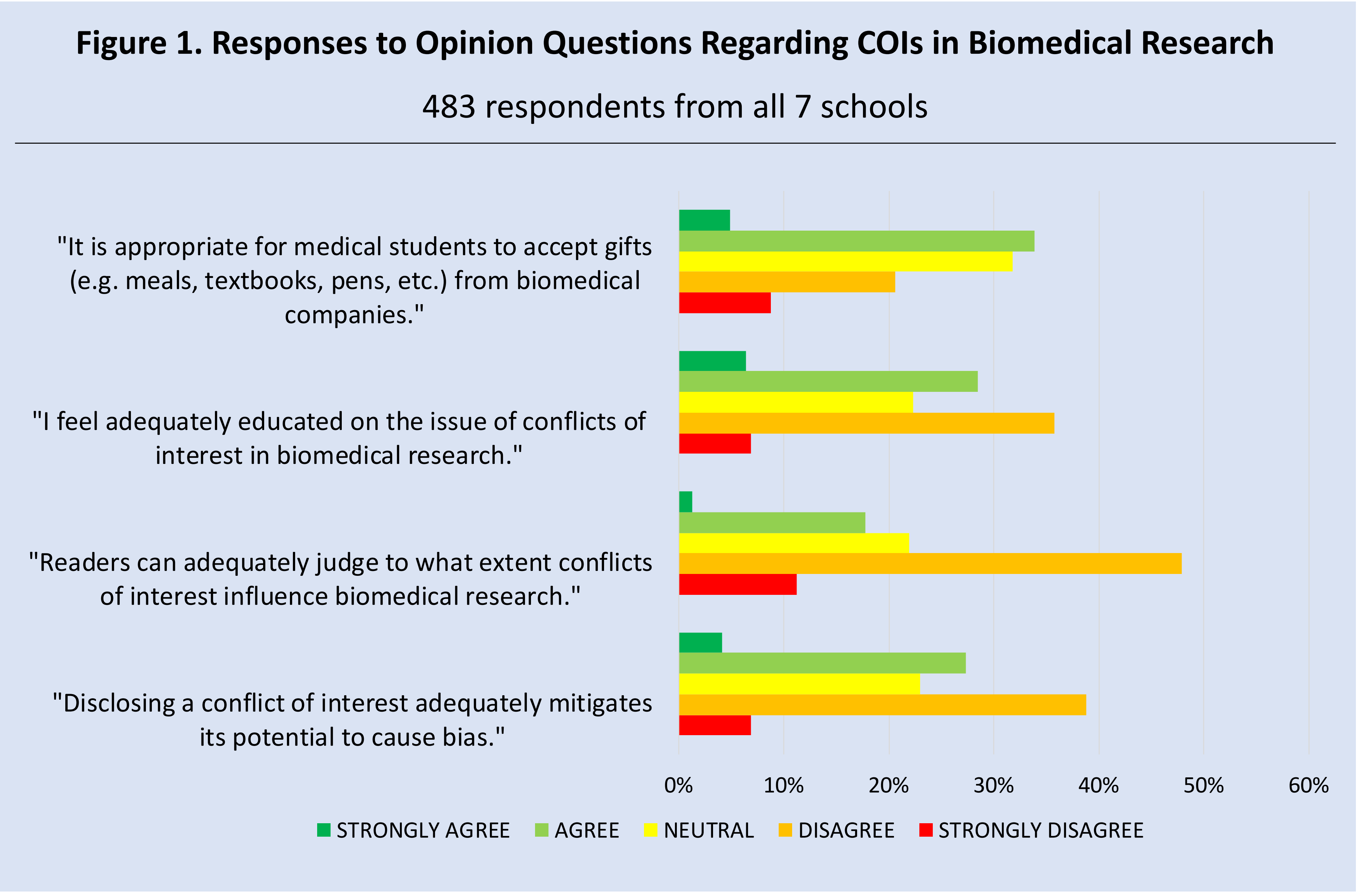
Assess to what extent medical students believe COIs bias biomedical research.

Secondary Objective

Assess medical students' attitudes regarding education and regulatory policies of COIs in biomedical research.

Table 1. Responses to Bias Questions Regarding Gifts and Incentives.

FINANCIAL RELATIONSHIP	VERY UNLIKELY to bias, n (%)	UNLIKELY to bias, n (%)	Not sure, n (%)	LIKELY to bias, n (%)	VERY LIKELY to bias, n (%)
Food/Beverage	66 (14.2)	193 (41.4)	77 (16.5)	115 (24.7)	15 (3.2)
Travel/Leisure compensation	12 (2.6)	51 (10.9)	63 (13.5)	235 (50.4)	105 (22.5)
Gifts	8 (1.7)	46 (9.9)	86 (18.5)	238 (51.1)	88 (18.9)
Grants	10 (2.1)	29 (6.2)	67 (14.4)	162 (34.8)	198 (42.5)
Honorarium payment	5 (1.1)	11 (2.4)	60 (12.9)	200 (42.9)	190 (40.8)
Payment for lecture on company's behalf	7 (1.5)	61 (13.1)	70 (15.0)	205 (44.0)	123 (26.4)
Consulting	10 (2.1)	53 (11.4)	83 (17.8)	193 (41.4)	127 (27.3)
Editorial Support	9 (1.9)	52 (11.2)	117 (25.1)	196 (42.1)	92 (19.7)
Stock/ownership in company	3 (0.6)	7 (1.5)	33 (7.1)	104 (22.3)	319 (68.5)



Conclusions

- Medical students perceive industry interactions to influence and bias biomedical research.
- Many medical students feel poorly trained to judge the extent that COIs influence biomedical research.
- Medical schools may need to provide additional, standardized education to teach future physicians how to assess COIs and resist their influences on clinical decisions.

References

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