

SPOTTED

Ad-ing costs; troubling tests; smart money

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Ad-ing costs

The U.S. is one of just two countries that allow pharmaceutical companies to market prescription

drugs directly to consumers. (New Zealand is the other.) But the American Medical Association (AMA) **wants to change that** policy.

Last week, the physician organization called for a ban on direct-to-consumer drug advertising — a move that would free up lots of ad space (imagine your favorite television show without those lengthy lists of side effects) and possibly lower drug costs.

Drug companies spend an estimated \$4.5 billion on advertising, and it appears to pay off. About 28 percent of people **ask their doctors** about drugs they see advertised, and 12 percent end up with a prescription.

The AMA argues that direct-to-consumer advertising boosts the demand for pricey prescriptions when there are cheaper and equally effective treatment options.

SOURCES:

American Medical Association / 17 Nov 2015

AMA calls for ban on direct to consumer advertising of prescription drugs and medical devices
<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/news/news/2015/2015-11-17-ban-consumer-prescription-drug-advertising.page>

Troubling tests

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is taking aim at **inaccurate laboratory tests** that lead to unnecessary treatments.

In a 39-page report to Congress last week, the agency called out 20 tests that can be physically and financially harmful. Two purported 'autism tests' appear on the hit list, including one for heavy metal intoxication that supposedly identifies the cause of a child's autism. Based on the results, the makers of the test recommend treatments ranging from **chelation** therapy to **hyperbaric** oxygen, neither of which has been proven effective.

The test may have led to the misdiagnosis of more than 2,000 children, according to the FDA, prompting \$66.1 million in unnecessary tests and treatments.

SOURCES:

The Food and Drug Administration / 16 Nov 2015

The public health evidence for FDA oversight of laboratory developed tests: 20 case studies
<http://www.fda.gov/downloads/AboutFDA/ReportsManualsForms/Reports/UCM472777.pdf>

Smart money

Most granting agencies want to fund high-stakes, groundbreaking research with potentially huge payoffs. But this lofty goal might not be promoting the best science, according to **Dorothy Bishop**, professor of developmental neuropsychology at Oxford University in the U.K.

“Irreproducible research is a waste of money, and actually impedes scientific progress by filling the literature with irreproducible false-positive findings that, once published, never die,” Bishop writes in a guest blog published earlier this week on *Retraction Watch*.

Funders play a key role in making science more solid, Bishop writes, and granting agencies should make reproducibility a top criterion in their funding decisions. She outlines six steps for them to take to achieve this objective.

SOURCES:

Retraction Watch / 24 Nov 2015

Improving reproducibility: What can funders do?

<http://retractionwatch.com/2015/11/24/improving-reproducibility-what-can-funders-do-guest-post-by-dorothy-bishop/>

Dance off

And now, a little entertainment for the holidays. *Science* announced the winners of its annual ‘**Dance your Ph.D.**’ contest Wednesday.

Top prize went to Florence Metz, whose combination of **hip-hop, salsa and acro-yoga** brought her research on water protection policy to life.

“My main aim with this video was to make people laugh,” Metz told *Science*, noting that the dance actually helped people to better understand her work. “This bridge between academia and the nonacademic world is crucial.”

SOURCES:

Science / 24 Nov 2015

Announcing the 2015 Dance Your Ph.D. winner

<http://news.sciencemag.org/people-events/2015/11/announcing-2015-dance-your-ph-d-winner?rss=1>
