

Open Payments: Financial Transparency Between Medical Providers and Manufacturers

Vincent La

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What is Open Payments?

1. Program created by the Affordable Care Act to increase transparency of payments to medical providers from manufacturers
2. Financial Conflicts of Interests for Medical Providers
3. Summary Statistics (2014)¹
 - \$6.45 Billion total payments
 - 607,000 Providers
 - 1,122 Teaching Hospitals

¹<https://openpaymentsdata.cms.gov/summary>

Why do we care? A Real Life Example: Vioxx (Merck)

Financial Conflict of Interests \Rightarrow Clinical Trials?²

- ① Approved 1999 by the FDA, Vioxx treated patients with arthritis and other conditions causing chronic or acute pain
- ② Prescribed to over 80 million patients
- ③ Study published in NEJM, submitted to the FDA, failed to report patients taking Vioxx were 21% more likely to develop serious illnesses than patients taking the generic counterpart
- ④ **All 13 authors had financial ties or were employed by Merck.**
- ⑤ Summary of timeline of events³

²<http://www.jabfm.org/content/18/5/414.full.pdf>

³<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5470430>

Why do we care?

Financial Conflict of Interests \Rightarrow Medical Practice?

- ① In a survey of 3,100 physicians, 94% report some financial relationship with industry in the previous year.⁴
 - ① Meals: 83%
 - ② Drug Samples: 78%
 - ③ Industry Reimbursement for professional meetings: 35%
 - ④ Consulting/Speaking Fees/Clinical Trials: 28%
- ② Transfers exceeding \$1000 from a pharmaceutical company to a physician resulted in 60 additional prescriptions per year by that physician for drugs manufactured by the company.⁵

⁴<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK22944/>

⁵<http://rady.ucsd.edu/faculty/directory/engelberg/pub/portfolios/doctors.pdf>

What can we do?

- 1 Open Payments Data:
<https://www.cms.gov/OpenPayments/Explore-the-Data/Data-Overview.html>
- 2 Build a Search Tool: Better lookup tool (by NPI, geographic location, physician specialty, etc.)
- 3 **Data Visualization**

Project Idea: Data Visualization

While CMS's provided search tool could use better features, I think there's a lot of opportunity for interesting data visualizations.

- ① Create a heat map showing payment “hot spots” geographically at a general level
- ② At a local level, allow people to zoom into a certain geographical area and show a list of actual providers with the amount of money they receive from manufacturers (think Zillow map of house values) **Goal: Better information dissemination; allow patients to better shop around for high-value care!**
- ③ Example of some data visualizations with healthcare data: <http://www.dartmouthatlas.org/>

Conclusion

GitHub: https://github.com/VincentLa/open_payments

Contact Info: vincela14@gmail.com