

**RCR Topic:** Conflict of Interest

**Title:** Show Me The Money!

**Case:** Dr. Galloway's lab has been studying the effect of certain compounds on high blood pressure. Mr. Conte, a representative from Drug Inc., has approached him about doing a study on Compound Q, a natural compound found in some plants that may lower the blood pressure of patients with chronic high blood pressure.

- Dr. Galloway is a world-renowned pharmacologist, and is well respected within his field. When he publishes a study, people tend to take notice. However, since funding for the pharmacology research industry is very competitive, he is having trouble bringing in the money to fund his research.
- Drug Inc. is willing to fund 100% of the costs associated with this study. Although nothing is put into writing, Mr. Conte hints that if the outcome appears beneficial, the company would be willing to fund future studies in Dr. Galloway's lab.
- Dr. Galloway has actually been following Drug Inc. and several of their products for several years, and believes that many of their products show promise. Because of this, and unbeknownst to Mr. Conte and Drug Inc., Dr. Galloway carries a small amount of stock in the company.

Dr. Galloway decides to go ahead and pursue the study. Since he wants to avoid issues associated with a conflict of interest, he assigns a valued postdoctoral fellow to serve as PI for the project, although Dr. Galloway is still involved with some of the data analyses. The study shows that the product being tested likely has positive benefits, and Galloway's lab publishes these results. In the following years, Dr. Galloway's lab conducts several other studies that are funded by Drug Inc.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. According to MSU policies, does Dr. Galloway have a conflict of interest that should have been disclosed to the university and to everyone else involved with this study?
2. Is Dr. Galloway avoiding this conflict of interest by assigning someone from his lab to do the actual study and not doing it himself?
3. Was it wrong for Mr. Conte to suggest to the Galloway lab that positive results would likely lead to future funding?
4. Where could Dr. Galloway and others learn more about conflicts of interest in research?