

HOW WAS INDUSTRY REPRESENTED IN THE PODIUM PRESENTATIONS OF ICS 2009?

Hypothesis / aims of study

Our group considered it would be valuable to assess the extent to which industry funding was acknowledged during presentations at the ICS Annual Scientific Meeting in 2009.

Study design, materials and methods

Declarations of funding were sought for each presentation in the abstract book. A member of our group was in the audience when 177 (62%) of the presentations were made. That person was tasked with assessing whether or not the presentation acknowledged funding (“Yes/No”) and on a scale of 1-5 as to whether the presentation exhibited industry influence (1=none, 5 = heavy industrial influence.)

Results

There were 284 podium presentations at ICS in 2009. An analysis of the funding sources published in the proceedings showed that 137 (48%) acknowledged funding. Based on the title of the source, funding was deemed to have possibly been directly from industry in 38 (13%) although in 15 (5%) instances, the name of the source of funding was so obscure that it was unclear whether or not the organization was academic, charitable or an industry sponsored foundation (see shades of green in Figure 1).

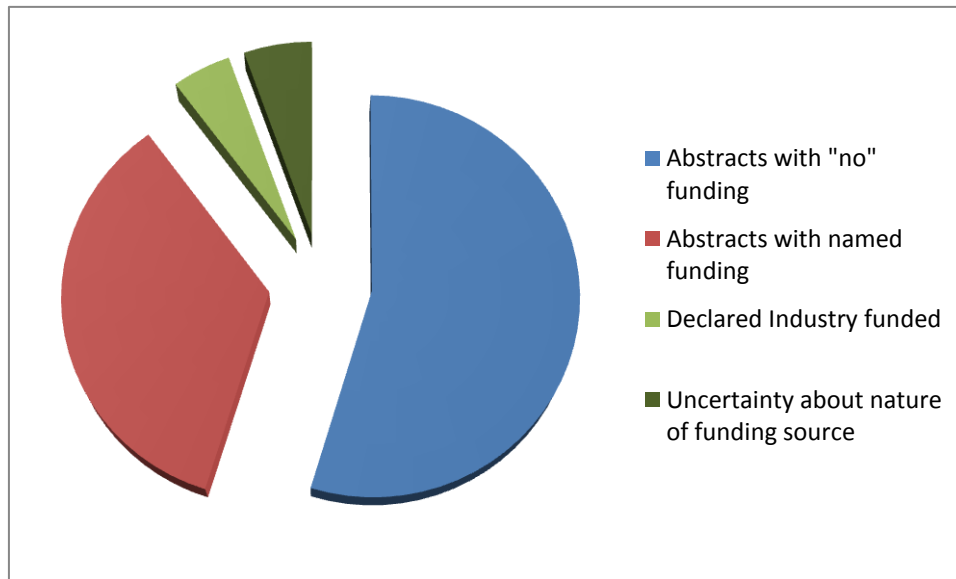


Figure 1 Funding declared in abstracts presented at ICS 2009

The declaration published in the abstract related only to funding the research project and exceedingly few presenters declared any sponsorship for attending the meeting.

Unfortunately the proportion of attendees who are genuinely “self” funding is not known but the straw poll conducted at the State of the Art Ethics lecture revealed that it was the minority.

Of the podium papers presented, there were 10 that had been declared as being industry sponsored in the written abstract but this link was not mentioned by the presenter in 7 instances, and in 2 of these there appeared to the EC observer, that there was a significant degree of industry influence.

Four podium posters were not declared verbally to have been industry sponsored and the observer thought that industry involvement was in fact substantial.

There were 2 podium video sessions both attended by an observer. The abstracts for these do not appear in the published book so that no written declaration of interests was available. Our reviewers noted that none of the presenters declared a commercial interest but that all but 2 out of the 17 presentations showed a degree of industry influence, the majority rated as “heavy”.

Interpretation of results

Based on the findings the following recommendations will be made by our group

1. The declaration form with the abstract submission should ask not only for the name of the funding organization but also whether that organization has industry links.
2. All presenters should make a declaration of their funding links both for the research and also if not “self”, what organization has enabled them to attend the meeting.

3. Funding sources should appear on the title slide for oral presentations and for posters even if there is a strict limit on the number allowed for a poster presentation.
4. Podium videos must make a clear statement of industry links, both written and verbally.

Concluding message

Industry has a very important role in supporting research and the ICS meeting but that role should be clear and open.

<i>Specify source of funding or grant</i>	None
<i>Is this a clinical trial?</i>	No
<i>What were the subjects in the study?</i>	NONE