


The effect of educational gifts from pharmaceutical firms on medical students' recall of company names or products.


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[Sandberg WS](#), [Carlos R](#), [Sandberg EH](#), [Roizen MF](#)

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Abstract

PURPOSE: To assess the influence of pharmaceutical advertising (in the form of books) directed at medical students and also to examine students' attitudes toward pharmaceutical representatives after interacting with them. **METHOD:** Two groups of fourth-year medical students were surveyed: 166 residency applicants to the Department of Anesthesia and Critical Care between 1991 and 1993, who were questioned during their personal interviews with the department chair, and 39 fourth-year students from the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine in 1994-95, who were surveyed by telephone. The students were asked if they had ever received a book from a pharmaceutical representative and, if so, to name the book. Then they were asked to name the book-giving company or a product associated with the company. Responses were compared using chi-square analysis. **RESULTS:** In all, 90% of the students had received one or more books and accurately recalled titles for 89% of them. However, only 25% of the named books were accurately associated with a pharmaceutical company or product. The Pritzker students, asked to recall interactions with pharmaceutical representatives, reported being skeptical of representatives who ignored them because they were students, but they rated as helpful and informative those who conversed with them or gave them gifts. **CONCLUSION:** Although gifts to medical students do not necessarily engender company or product recall, attention paid to medical students by pharmaceutical representatives engenders goodwill toward the representatives and their

messages.



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