

Industry influence on research translation

(How to reduce industry influence over evidence-informed guidelines)

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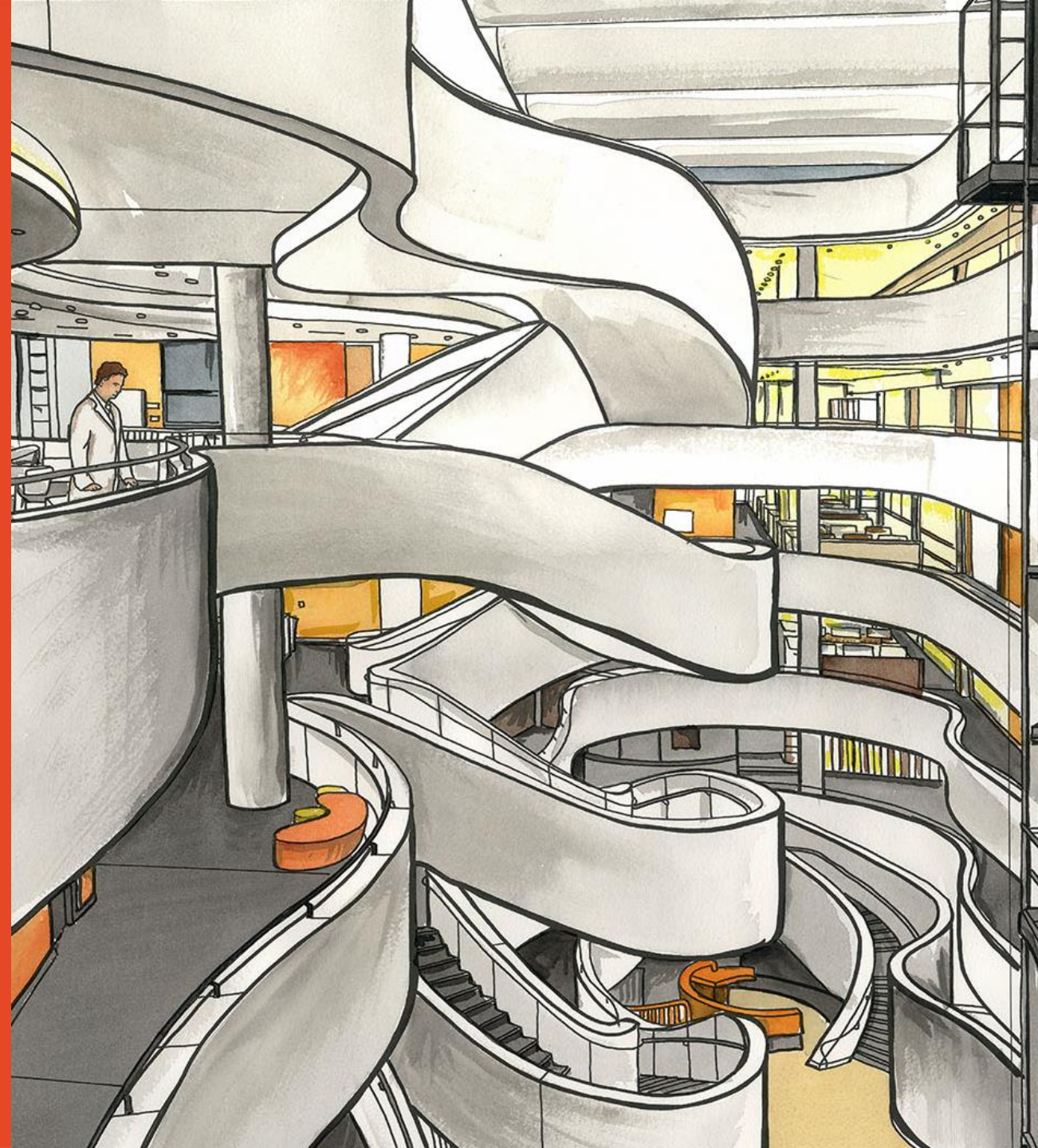


THE UNIVERSITY OF
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Translating research into health guidelines

Translating research into health guidelines

Diet and nutrition are key factors in the public's health

- Obesity and diabetes are serious public health crises
- Obesity is responsible for 5% of deaths worldwide*
- Promotion of healthy eating is a global issue^
- Nutrition research and dietary guidance should have the public's interests at heart

*Dobbs et al, 2014; ^WHO 2021

Australian Guide to Healthy Eating

Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods from these five food groups every day.
Drink plenty of water.



Use small amounts



Only sometimes and in small amounts



Guideline Committee processes



Selection of Guideline
Committee Chair + Members



Guideline Committee review of
evidence



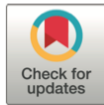
Guideline Committee decision-
making



Guideline Committee – risk of industry influence

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FEATURE

NUTRITION

The scientific report guiding the US dietary guidelines: is it scientific?

It has a big impact on the diet of American citizens, and those of most Western nations, so why does the expert advice underpinning US government dietary guidelines not take account of all the relevant scientific evidence? **Nina Teicholz** reports



Guideline Committees – risk of industry influence

1. Evidence-based guidelines rely on unbiased evidence



Guideline Committees – risk of industry influence

1. Evidence-based guidelines rely on unbiased evidence
2. Even with unbiased evidence, committee-based decision-making may be at risk of industry influence due to the

‘megaphone effect’

where multiple people have similar conflicts of interest, delivering a risk of bias in the SAME DIRECTION



Financial links with global corporations carry high level risk because of the **megaphone effect**

> The extensive reach of global corporations means there is a risk of systemic bias because multiple researchers are likely to have similar financial conflicts of interest that carry bias in the same direction

A risk management tool to manage COI in Guideline committees

A risk management tool to manage COI in Guideline committees

Our principles (informed by ethics theory and our professional experience):

- Disclosure is not sufficient to reduce the risk of bias
- Level of risk of influence associated with conflict of interest varies
 - depends on the nature and extent of the conflict of interest
 - depends on the context
- The tool should match the severity of risk with specific management strategies

How to determine level of risk

Pre-determined criteria for level of risk

<i>Level of risk of influence</i>	<i>Type of interest</i>	<i>Example</i>	<i>Example of entity generating secondary interest</i>
High	Financial link with global industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant to Company • Recipient of research grant • Recipient of speaker fees • Company board member 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Big Food’ company • global pharmaceutical company • global agricultural company • big trade organization that represents industry interests

<i>Level of risk of influence</i>	<i>Type of interest</i>	<i>Example</i>	<i>Example of entity generating secondary interest</i>
Medium	Financial link with small local company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recipient of research funds from local company • Self-employed as independent business owner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small producer or retailer • Independent local pharmacy • Independent solo consultant giving advice or opinion • Independent business owner selling products related to topic
	Financial link with govt organisation funded by industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University employer is heavily funded by global corporation and Committee Member is involved in university governance over industry funding 	Formal partnership between government organisation + global corporation

<i>Level of risk of influence</i>	<i>Type of interest</i>	<i>Example</i>	<i>Example of entity generating secondary interest</i>
Low or no risk	Professional interests	Committee member: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a public profile as an expert / key opinion leader (not industry funded) • Has previously published on related research • Has been a member of previous guidelines committee • Is a health professional in related field 	n/a
	Personal experiences, values, habits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political and economic views • Spiritual or religious affiliation • Cultural practices or ethnicity • Dietary preferences or habits • Social relationships with other committee members 	n/a

How to mediate / manage risk

The level of risk is matched to management strategies

How to mediate / manage risk

<i>Level of risk of influence</i>	<i>Type of interest</i>	<i>Examples</i>	<i>Management</i>
High risk	Financial links with global industry	Committee member is funded by a global corporation	Excluded from guideline committee
Medium risk	Financial links with small companies, personal financial gain	Committee member is funded by small, local company Or is funded by govt-industry partnership grant	Cannot chair guideline committee
Low/no risk	Professional interests, personal habits	Committee member is key opinion leader Committee member has dietary preferences	n/a

Process notes

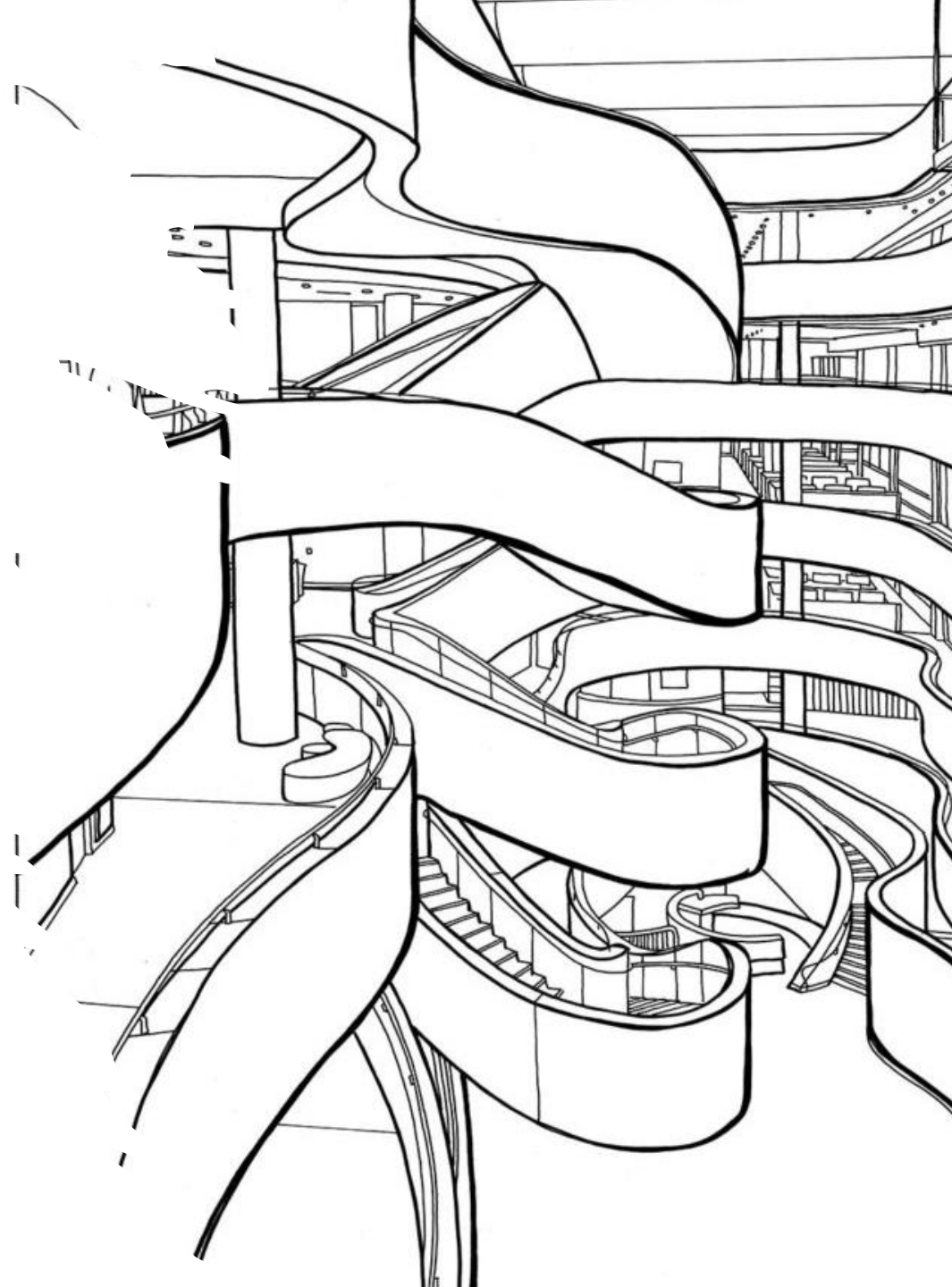
- Guideline committee organisers can develop their own risk matrix suited to their situation
 - eg specified time periods / thresholds for financial links with industry
- Prospective committee members should be educated about coi and which ones to declare
- Guideline organisers could use an independent advisor to help identify, assess and manage coi
- Make the process public:
 - risk matrix
 - coi declarations and assessment strategy
 - management strategy

FAQs

- If a committee member has financial links with multiple companies does that 'cancel out'?
- What if a committee member's employer (eg university) receives industry money?
- Why are professional interests among committee members considered low risk of influence over committee decision making?
- Can this risk matrix be used in other translation settings?

In conclusion:

- Industry funding of guideline committee members poses a risk of bias to research translation
- A stepped risk matrix model helps to identify levels of risk of bias amongst guideline committee members
- Strategies to reduce risk of influence should be matched to level of risk





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Managing risk from conflicts of interest in guideline development committees

Lisa Parker and **Lisa Bero** argue that we need transparent tailored criteria to assess and respond to potential bias created by guideline committee members with conflicts of interest

Lisa Parker,¹ Lisa Bero²

Evidence informed guidelines produced by global institutions, government bodies, and professional or charitable health organisations aim to promote best

not necessarily in the best interests of individual or public health.¹⁶ The extent to which a committee member's conflict of interest is likely to influence the