

Open Payments Database

Physicians and hospital systems often have relationships with biomedical manufacturers to develop new ideas, products, and further education. Because this relationship can influence medical research and practice, reporting disclosures are necessary to reveal any potential bias and inform consumers. The Sunshine Act was created to develop a new reporting system of these financial relationships called the Open Payments database. Currently all disclosures submitted with research to scientific meetings are at the discretion of the physician.

The Open Payments Database (OPD) was launched by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services in 2014. Through this online searchable database, the public can explore physician-industry interactions.

Financial interactions between orthopaedic surgeons and industry are highly prevalent. A small subset of orthopaedic surgeons received large royalties, which accounted for a majority of the transactional value provided by industry. Orthopaedic surgeons were the recipients of more payments for travel and for royalties than all other specialties except neurological surgery; however, the median value of these and other payments was similar to that for other specialties ¹⁾.

To date, there is no published literature on the accuracy of the database for neurosurgeons or any physician specialty.

To study the accuracy of published records and scope of industry-neurosurgeon relationships between neurosurgeons and industry within the OPD.

Babu et al., searched 4.3 million records in 2013 and 11.41 million records in 2014 in the OPD for board-certified neurosurgeons verified by the American Board of Neurological Surgery. Delimit software was used to condense these data, Microsoft Access for database queries, and STATA to perform descriptive analyses.

Of the 3240 neurosurgeons in the OPD in 2013, 2020 were identified correctly as neurosurgeons within the database (62%). Of the 3593 neurosurgeons in the OPD in 2014, 2433 were identified correctly as neurosurgeons (68%). Within the OPD in 2013, there were 72 066 attributed records for neurosurgeons; within the 2014 OPD, there were 160 563 attributed records for neurosurgeons. Total payments to neurosurgeons in 2013 (for the 9 months published in OPD): \$61 802 659.37; in 2014: \$117 127 824.00.

The OPD details physician interactions with industry and has multiple inaccuracies. Publicly availing inaccurate information through a searchable governmental website that can be accessed by patients and journalists alike has the potential to tarnish individual neurosurgeons and undermine professional credibility ²⁾.

¹⁾

Iyer S, Derman P, Sandhu HS. Orthopaedics and the Physician Payments Sunshine Act: An Examination of Payments to U.S. Orthopaedic Surgeons in the Open Payments Database. *J Bone Joint Surg Am*. 2016 Mar 2;98(5):e18. doi: 10.2106/JBJS.O.00343. PubMed PMID: 26935466.

²⁾

Babu MA, Heary RF, Nahed BV. Does the Open Payments Database Provide Sunshine on Neurosurgery? *Neurosurgery*. 2016 Dec;79(6):933-938. PubMed PMID: 27580479.

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