

CORRESPONDENCE

not allow the same security. How did we defend ourselves against our own biases?

Beyond the care brought to bear on study construction, execution, and analysis, we sought the expertise of several critics both before and after completion of the investigations. The helpfulness of some of these critics was acknowledged in the paper. We adopted most of the suggestions advocated by ANESTHESIOLOGY's reviewers, gleefully refuting a few. Perhaps most important, we sought the advice of those who had a paternal interest in sevoflurane, one similar to our own interest in desflurane. We invited senior researchers investigating the properties of sevoflurane to critique the manuscripts. We also asked the commercial parties responsible for the development of sevoflurane to examine both the manuscripts and our data. Several representatives from Abbott Laboratories came to our laboratory, reviewed manuscripts and data, peered through microscopes, and offered suggestions for changes and further experiments. I believe that we complied with *all* their suggestions (including those for further experiments) and that the final product was the better for their help. We offered coauthorship on our papers, but they gracefully declined.

I believe that the important issues pertaining to our commercial *versus* research interests in desflurane relate more to motivation and bias than to conflict of interest. Motivation and bias are vital to the scientific enterprise; life would be dull without them. We can use motivation to animate and give pleasure to our work. We must prevent bias from compromising that work.

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In Reply:—I could not agree more with Peterson, who expresses concern that young, academic anesthesiologists may be seduced by the promise of easy money and other perquisites into performing studies that have little clinical interest or intrinsic scientific value. At the same time, new drugs must be tested properly in humans. Therefore, what I recommend is that the sponsor and the investigator design the study to satisfy the needs of both, *i.e.*, address questions that allow the investigator to mature as a scientist and that allow the sponsor to obtain information of value to agencies demanding such data.

Similarly, I take little issue with Eger's letter. He elegantly details and defends the process by which the studies^{1,2} that comprised the subject of my editorial were conceived and performed. Clearly, publication of these papers reflects the Editorial Board's conviction that scientific validity of these papers was not questioned. Still, appearances are important and I reiterate my comment, "Surely, there are well regarded toxicology laboratories that might have carried out these studies equally well . . ."³

In the end, had others performed these studies, it is likely that just what Eger desired—to be right—would have been demonstrated,

Edmond I. Eger II, M.D.
Professor and Vice Chairman for Research
Department of Anesthesia
University of California
Box 0464, Sciences-455
513 Parnassus Avenue
San Francisco, California 94143-0464

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but without the conflict-of-interest issue being raised, which, in the minds of some, have made him less right than he otherwise might have been.

Lawrence J. Saidman, M.D.
Editor in Chief

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