

Industry Payments to Orthopedic Society Board Members, 2017-2023

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INTRODUCTION: Financial relationships between physicians and industry have been an important and hotly contested topic, with the potential to affect patient care and the development of innovative new technologies. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has kept records of these financial disclosures using the National Physician Payment Transparency Program and Open Payments Database following the passage of the Physician Payments Sunshine Act in 2010. Numerous descriptive studies have characterized these financial disclosure, though most have used data from 2019 and prior. Orthopedic society board members are a thus far understudied demographic; it is believed that these board members represent leaders in their field, which may correlate with impressive research output and high financial payments from industry. The goal of this descriptive study was to characterize 24 major orthopedic society board members by the payments they have received from industry. We hypothesized that subspecialties that rely heavily on implants, such as arthroplasty and spine, will have the highest amount of industry payments.

METHODS:

Society board members were identified from the websites of 24 prominent associations in orthopedic surgery. The CMS Open Payments Database was queried and data on industry payments for each board member was recorded. As the Open Payments Database lists only physicians, board members without a doctorate of medicine degree were excluded from the study. Data was combined from 2017 through 2023 for total payments, consulting fees, services other than consulting, travel/lodging, food/beverage and entertainment, royalties, faculty/speaking fees, acquisitions, education, gifts and honoraria, grants, and research payments. Descriptive analyses were performed for each society, including the mean, median, interquartile range, minimum, and maximum total payments for each. Kruskal-Wallis tests were performed for total payments, consulting fees, and royalties. As each showed a statistically significant difference, pairwise comparisons of association were performed with Bonferroni correction to identify which societies were significantly different in payments from each other.

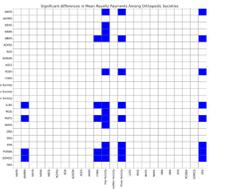
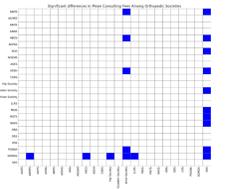
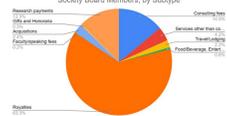
RESULTS: The highest mean payments were seen in the Knee Society (\$4,599,242.45), the Hip Society (\$2,711,109.84), the American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons (\$2,502,558.30), and the Scoliosis Research Society (\$2,034,722.41). **Table 1** further characterizes each society. Of the total payments, 63.3% were made via royalties.

Figure 1 visualizes each type of industry payment as a pie chart. The Kruskal-Wallis tests for total payments, consulting fees, and royalties were all statistically significant at $p < 0.001$. **Figures 2-4** show the significant differences between orthopedic societies from the pairwise comparisons of association with Bonferroni correction.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION:

Orthopedic society board members average a very high amount of industry payments, though even among these leaders, much of the payments are directed at a select few individuals. Implant heavy specialty societies, such as the Hip Society, the Knee Society, the American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons, and the Scoliosis Research Society, averaged the highest payments from industry. It is not clear if some of these board members receive such high industry payments due to their status as leadership for their subspecialties, or if they have achieved their leadership status due to their history of high industry engagement. Further studies are needed to elucidate these relationships.

Figure 1: Breakdown of Mean Total Payments to Orthopedic Society Board Members, by Subtype



Society	Mean Total Payments	Median Total Payments	Q1 Total Payments	Q3 Total Payments	Min Total Payments	Max Total Payments
Knee Society	\$4,599,242.45					
Hip Society	\$2,711,109.84					
American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons	\$2,502,558.30					
Scoliosis Research Society	\$2,034,722.41					