

Memorial Sloan Kettering scandal prompts wave of medical journal corrections from top facilities

Alyssa Rege - Tuesday, October 16th, 2018 [Print](#) | [Email](#)

Top researchers at the New York City-based Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Boston-based Brigham and Women's Hospital and other top healthcare facilities across the nation have begun issuing corrections with medical journals and divulging financial relationships with healthcare companies in light of a recent scandal at MSKCC.

Here are six things to know:

1. Researchers at MSKCC have filed at least seven corrections with medical journals recently, according to a [joint investigation](#) by *The New York Times* and *ProPublica*. Among those are Jed Wolchok, MD, PhD, an oncologist at MSKCC, who disclosed his relationships with 31 companies.

"Out of an abundance of caution I reviewed over 300 publications over the course of three decades and decided to update disclosures, even in cases where it wasn't necessary, where the journal didn't require it, and where I conducted no original research and did literature reviews. In some cases, publications have rejected these updates because they have determined they are not relevant to the subject matter," Dr. Wolchok said in a statement obtained by *Becker's Hospital Review*.

2. The corrections came on the heels of a scandal involving José Baselga, the former physician-in-chief and CMO of MSKCC, who [resigned](#) from the institution in September after failing to disclose his company ties in dozens of articles in medical journals, including *The New England Journal of Medicine*. Dr. Baselga's omissions reportedly included payments totaling millions of dollars.

3. A spokesperson for MSKCC told *The New York Times* and *ProPublica* the institution instructed its researchers to review their conflict-of-interest disclosures and submit corrections where necessary. He also cited the "patchwork" of disclosure requirements by the different publications that complicate matters.

"In many cases, researchers are now disclosing above and beyond what is asked for and required, even when their disclosures have no connection to the research they conducted," the spokesperson said, adding that MSKCC has created a task force to establish its own standards to the "massive, industrywide problem."

4. In response to the MSKCC scandal, notable hospitals and health systems nationwide have begun to disclose researchers' industry ties that may present conflicts of interest. Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women's Hospital, both in Boston, recently recommended 31 papers from a former lab director be retracted, [STAT News](#) reports.

5. The papers were from the lab of cardiac researcher Piero Anversa, MD, and allegedly "included falsified and/or fabricated data," *STAT* reports.

"Following a review of research conducted in the former lab of [Dr.] Piero Anversa, we determined that 31 publications included falsified and/or fabricated data, and we have notified all relevant journals. We are committed to upholding the highest ethical standards and to rigorously maintaining the integrity of our research. Any concerns brought to our attention are reviewed in accordance with institutional policies and applicable regulations," Harvard and Brigham and Women's told *STAT* in a joint statement.

6. Dr. Anversa became affiliated with Brigham and Women's and Harvard Medical School in 2007 and became a full professor in 2010. The institutions closed his lab in 2015. Dr. Anversa no longer works at the hospital.

Editor's note: This article was updated on Oct. 29 at 1:30 p.m. to include additional information from Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center.

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