

IDRC public scandal: phase 2

Phase 1 of the IDRC (International Development Research Centre) public scandal was the presence of a representative of the tobacco industry as chair of its Board (as Barbara McDougall was until March 2010).¹ Phase 2 requires a question nobody asks: What did IDRC do with the Gates Foundation money under McDougall's stewardship? What did IDRC do with the \$3 505 535 that was not allocated to African grantees?

On December 2007, the Gates Foundation awarded \$5 274 477 to IDRC to promote tobacco control in Africa. At the same time, McDougall, who was a Director of Imperial Tobacco Canada Ltd., became chair of the IDRC Board of Governors. Under her chairmanship, the African grantees apparently received \$1 768 942, which represents between 30% and 33% of the grant awarded by the Gates Foundation. What happened to the remaining 67%?

Véronique Le Clezio
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REFERENCE

1. Hébert PC, Reddy KS, Jha P. Canada's perceived lack of leadership on global tobacco control. *CMAJ* 2010;182:E427

For the full letter, go to: www.cmaj.ca/cgi/eletters/182/10/E427#551112

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Preoperative marking of limbs

Knight and Wedge illustrate an important and familiar problem with marking limbs preoperatively with arrows or symmetric symbols.¹ I have taken to marking limbs with either my initials or my signature. I insist that residents under supervision do this before I check the patient. Thus, even if the signature is barely legible, its owner, who is also the operating surgeon, can determine which is the original signature and which is the transferred mirror image.

I encourage each operating surgeon to consider this approach as a practical and safe marking method.

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REFERENCE

1. Knight DMA, Wedge JH. Marking the operative site: a lesson learned. *CMAJ* 2010 Aug 3 [Epub ahead of print].

For the full letter, go to: www.cmaj.ca/cgi/eletters/cmaj.091860v1#595170

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Multiple sclerosis: liberation procedure

I saw Dr. Paul Hébert on *Global National* talking about Zamboni's work^{1,2} as dilating veins in the brain. This is false: angioplasty is done on the jugular veins in the neck and the azygos vein in the chest. How do I know? Because I had this done in Poland a month ago. The next time someone talks about a medical procedure, perhaps he or she should have the facts straight first.

Jason Kaye
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1. Stanbrook MB, Hébert PC. Access to treatment for multiple sclerosis must be based on science, not hope. *CMAJ* 2010;182:1151.
2. Zamboni P, Galeotti R, Menegatti E, et al. A prospective open-label study of endovascular treatment of chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency. *J Vasc Surg* 2009;50:1348–58.

For the full letter, go to: www.cmaj.ca/cgi/eletters/182/11/1151/#595160

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I was heartened to hear that the liberation procedure was successful for Mr. Kaye. I fully acknowledge that I am not an expert in this area.

From the limited reports of this procedure in the literature, it appears that imaging of the jugular venous and azygos systems as well as the vertebrobasilar system may be undertaken, although this is not clear from Zamboni's report.¹ To perform the imaging, one would, on occasion, advance a

large catheter as far as the lower part of the brain. From the original description, balloon dilations and stent procedures are most commonly performed within the internal jugular system, as Kaye has suggested. As researchers initiate studies of cerebral venous drainage, venous imaging may eventually involve the brain's venous system. This may eventually be followed by attempted dilations of intracranial venous systems.

In news reports, I mentioned that catheters were inserted through various entry points, including the jugular vein, as discussed, or advanced as far as the brain for imaging beyond possible stenosis. At present, this appears technically correct based on the limited descriptions of the procedure.

My major point, however, was that the liberation procedure is still experimental and requires much more evaluation before it is made widely available. All procedures have risks, not only widely reported benefits. All vascular procedures include death as a known complication. As an aside, I should point out that we cause stenoses of the venous system in a large number of patients receiving dialysis because of long-term catheter use. As far as I am aware, we see no increase in the occurrence of multiple sclerosis in these patients.

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REFERENCE

1. Zamboni P, Galeotti R, Menegatti E, et al. A prospective open-label study of endovascular treatment of chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency. *J Vasc Surg* 2009;50:1348–58.

For the full letter, go to: www.cmaj.ca/cgi/eletters/182/11/1151/#595164

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Quality evidence important for quality guidelines

AGREE^{1,2} focuses on methodologic issues about guideline development and reporting. Although important, these issues are insufficient to ensure that