



**Embargoed for 00:01 EDT am Friday 03 October, 2014**

**Contact:** Fran Morrison  
Media Liaison, GTNF 2014  
**Email:** [fmorrison@tobaccoreporter.com](mailto:fmorrison@tobaccoreporter.com)  
**Tel:** +44 7919 410655.

### **Censoring tobacco science - political imperative or editorial weakness**

**02 October 2014; West Virginia, USA:** The topic of science censorship was front and center today at the Global Tobacco Networking Forum as several speakers expressed concerns over the decision of a few journals to introduce a policy of not publishing research wholly or partly funded by the tobacco industry.

The benefits to society of robust and unencumbered scientific research and debate are incalculable, especially given the role of science in developing sound public policy. So although some public health researchers may be delighted by the decision of these journal editors, there are many who are concerned by this censorship. An important area of concern is electronic cigarettes, which are the subject of much debate over potential harms and benefits. As tobacco companies embrace this new technology, publishing bans will make researching their efficacy as a nicotine replacement therapy and publishing the results difficult or impossible.

'Scientific research should be judged by the quality and significance of the work, the integrity of the investigators and their ability to provide appropriate oversight, not by the funding source,' Professor Jed Rose, Director of the Center for Smoking Cessation at Duke University told delegates at the conference. Rose is co-inventor of the nicotine patch.

Professor Neil McKeganey, Director of the Center for Drug Misuse Research, in Glasgow, Scotland, also commented: 'Banning research funded by the tobacco industry is fundamentally anti-science. It is not exclusions from the scientific enterprise we should be looking for but transparency of evidence. Everyone should have access to the data upon which policies are being developed and implemented. Those journals that will not publish any research funded by the tobacco industry are effectively saying that their own peer review processes are inadequate.'

'If editors are concerned about the effectiveness of their peer-review system, this is a serious problem,' said Dr Chris Proctor, Chief Scientific Officer at British American Tobacco. 'Studies approved through peer review have long been the currency of scientific credibility. Applying selective censorship does not help to address problems that exist in the peer-review process

but merely serves to distinguish journals of unassailable scientific integrity from those that politicise science,' he said.

McKeganey added: The only basis upon which research should be judged worthy of publication should be the quality of the research that is carried out. All published research should indicate the source of its funding and undergo appropriate peer review. For journal editors to simply announce that they will no longer publish research funded by the tobacco industry smacks of soviet style political dictat – something that should have no place in the scientific endeavour.'

**For more information contact: Fran Morrison** email: [fmorrison@tobaccoreporter.com](mailto:fmorrison@tobaccoreporter.com), Tel: +44 7919 410655

### **Notes to Editors**

**About the Global Tobacco Networking Forum:** The Global Tobacco Networking Forum (GTNF) is the world's premier venue for interaction among tobacco and e-cigarettes industry representatives and engagement with stakeholders. It brings together industry members, media, commentators, and representatives of NGOs and the finance sector for two days of presentation, discussion and networking. The GTNF debuted in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2008 and has subsequently been held in Bangalore, India (2010), Antwerp, Belgium (2012) and Cape Town, South Africa (2013). This year it will take place in West Virginia, USA. The GTNF is organised and hosted by Tobacco Reporter magazine and funded by sponsorship from numerous companies in the sector. For more information, visit: [www.gtnf-2014.com](http://www.gtnf-2014.com)