

Editorial

There is consensus among many professionals and researchers from a wide range of fields that next year is going to be a difficult one for those who work in research in this country. It is very likely that the current financial situation in Brazil will be reflected in a reduced level of investment in scientific output by research funding agencies. It will be no surprise if, in 2016, there is a drop in the number of undergraduate research scholarships, of bursaries for domestic masters, doctoral and post-doctoral research positions and of grants for doctorates including foreign sandwich placements and for postdoctoral research posts abroad. Brazilian scientists will more than ever need to be astute and creative, applying their intelligence to sustaining the level of knowledge creation for which our country has won recognition within the wider scientific community. This is going to be a major challenge.

Notwithstanding, researchers, particularly those with less experience, must guard against the possibility of being held hostage to business interests. What does it mean to be held hostage? To be held hostage is to accept financial support, in the form of fees, the material needed to conduct research and bonuses for production that is concluded to the benefit of a brand name. In its worst form it means failing to publish results that are inconvenient for a manufacturer. Such approaches can be seductive in view of the scarcity of resources for maintenance of equipment and the lack of new investment in research.

It must be understood that commercial products will still need to be studied before they can be used on human beings, but impartially and with recognition from the large manufacturers that we are conducting our research with integrity. Moreover, it is also important that young researchers are fully aware that the principles of good knowledge production cannot be founded on commercial brands, but are built upon good study designs and recognition of the value of clinical trials and epidemiological studies.

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