

SRNT 2025: Phase I

Stakeholder Survey Report

January 2019

**Conducted for
The Society for Research on Nicotine & Tobacco**

**by
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Stakeholder Survey Report Conducted November 2018

Introduction

In the fall of 2018 the leadership of the Society for Research on Nicotine & Tobacco (SRNT) launched “SRNT 2025”, a 15-month investigative process to address the primary question: “What will 2025 look like for SRNT’s long-term relevance and financial sustainability as a research-based association?”.

In particular the SRNT Board identified a number of factors they believe will impact the association in the next seven to ten years. Among these are:

- Potential future changes in the nicotine and tobacco research domain and funding for such research;
- The Tobacco Industry’s influence, including the establishment of the SmokeFree World Foundation and the rising tide of non-combustible products;
- Membership, specifically how SRNT may consider broadening the membership demographic and what that will mean for the association’s mission as well as its future growth; and
- SRNT University, its mission and curriculum focused on educating a broader stakeholder group.

The Board engaged JFB & Associates, LLC to lead SRNT through this project. Patricia Brownell Sterner, principal of JFB & Associates, will be the lead consultant. Ms. Sterner brings more than 30 years of experience in leading organizations and providing consulting services in the areas of governance, fundraising, program development, strategic visioning, and organizational development.

Phase I of SRNT 2025 launched with a survey to a select group of 29 stakeholders, the results of which will create the baseline for considering SRNT’s future. Participants for the first round of SRNT 2025 Stakeholder Survey, all of whom are members of SRNT, were selected to represent the breadth of SRNT’s membership, including:

- Discipline (pre-clinical, clinical, genomics, health disparities, adolescents, and public policy);
- Geography (Europe, North America, Latin America, Oceania, Middle East, Africa);
- Career Stage (early, mid- and later);

- US Federal Agencies (Food and Drug Administration, National Cancer Institute, National Institute on Drug Abuse);
- SRNT Programs/Organizations/Leadership (Europe and Oceania Chapters, SRNT's Journal *N&TR*, SRNT University, Networks, and Committees); and
- Strongly stated positions on both sides of the e-cigarette debate

There was 100% participation in the survey, resulting in the identification of primary themes that will set the stage for the next phase of work.

Following are the results of the Stakeholder Survey.

SRNT 2025: Phase I Stakeholder Survey Report Executive Summary

Introduction

In the fall of 2018, the leadership of the Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco (SRNT) launched “SRNT 2025”, a 15-month investigative process to address the primary question: “What will 2025 look like for SRNT’s long-term relevance and financial sustainability as a research-based association?”.

Phase I of SRNT 2025 launched with a survey to a select group of 29 stakeholders, the results of which will create the baseline for considering SRNT’s future. There were three sections that participants were asked to address:

Section 1: Future of Nicotine and Tobacco Research
Section 2: E-Cigarette Industry vs. Tobacco Industry
Section 3: Membership and Stakeholders

There was 100% participation in the survey, resulting in the identification of primary themes that will set the stage for the next phase of work.

The following Executive Summary summarizes the key findings in each of three sections.

Section 1: Future of Nicotine and Tobacco Research

Respondents were asked seven (7) questions about the future of the nicotine and tobacco research field. These were:

1. In your opinion, what are the three most significant challenges facing today’s nicotine and tobacco field of research? What will have to happen to overcome these challenges?
2. In your opinion, how will the nicotine and tobacco research field be different in 10 years?
3. What are the societal changes that can (will) influence the type of research our members currently do?
4. What should be SRNT’s role in shaping the future of the field?
5. How will the influence of the tobacco industry impact and/or change the field of research on nicotine and tobacco?
6. How will the tobacco industry’s shift from combustibles to e-cigarettes in higher income countries impact the future of tobacco and nicotine research overall?
7. In your opinion, how will the one billion dollars given by Phillip Morris to establish the Smoke-Free World Foundation impact the field in general and SRNT in particular?

There were five (5) emergent themes identified across responses to the seven questions, as follows:

1. Divisiveness in the field

2. Influence/Involvement of the Tobacco Industry (TI)
3. Changing (or potentially changing) Research Priorities and influencers
4. Decreasing Access to Research Funding
5. SRNT Leadership Role

All themes carried similar weight as to level of concern or focus.

Theme: *Divisiveness in the field*

Respondents noted concerns about growing divisions among researchers primarily attributed to collaboration of colleagues with the Tobacco Industry (i.e., receiving funding from the Tobacco Industry), spurred by the advent of e-cigarettes and vaping. The differing judgements between those who believe e-cigarettes represent ‘harm reduction’ versus those who take a zero tolerance stance towards any tobacco and nicotine products also add to the division.

While there was general agreement that representatives and professional non-researchers working in the Tobacco Industry should not be accepted into membership in SRNT, there is clear division on whether those same representatives and professionals should be allowed to attend and/or participate in SRNT conferences and activities. This division is highlighted as well in responses about membership.

One respondent noted that “Deterioration in the scientific enterprise such that challenges to established ideas and approaches are seen more as indicators of disloyalty to the public health-boosting goals of reducing preventable premature death and disease instead of good faith efforts to advance and improve the overall science base” most aptly illuminates what most respondents said about the positions being taken within the field.

Theme: *Impact of the Tobacco Industry Influence on Research*

Respondents addressed both what they see as *indicators* of Tobacco Industry (TI) influence, as well as the *results* of that influence.

Respondents were primarily in agreement that the Tobacco Industry will continue to provide its own research to influence public policy and regulation. The TI’s goal is to increase profits and expand product lines for that purpose.

Additionally, many perceived the establishment by Phillip Morris of the Smoke Free World Foundation (SFWF) as a potentially significant influencer on the future focus of research based on the size of funding that may be available. A majority of those responding were aligned in their opinions that research funded by the SFWF will be tainted by its association with Phillip Morris, and that research will not be in the best interests of the public health. Some did see benefits of SFWF, specifically as a new and significant source of funds.

Respondents remarked on their concern about what is seen as the ‘co-opting’ of researchers by the Tobacco Industry because of access to funding (primarily). They

also commented that the Tobacco Industry will continue to use its connections and efforts to shape the future of research, with an underlying goal of being viewed as “part of the solution”. Many also observed that the current field appears to be in reactionary mode to the Tobacco Industry’s ramping up of new products and the TI-funded research around those products.

Theme: *Shifting Research Priorities*

Respondents noted several ‘influencers’ that can and potentially will have significant impact on research priorities (and funding) in the future.

A key influencer cited by more than 75% of respondents is the rapid introduction of new nicotine and tobacco products in the marketplace, which makes it difficult to conduct and document harms or safety of the products. E-cigarettes, vaping, and the lack of regulation are major concerns as the industry changes; most felt it was unknown what impact these products will have on public health and that research is not able to keep up. Many felt that more diverse products and patterns of use will make it necessary for the research field to react to the changing landscape of multiple product use.

Socioeconomic health disparities were cited as key influencers for research priorities, with most respondents predicting a widening gap in public health. Specifically cited were greater tobacco-related inequities existing across the world based on poverty, mental health, and drug dependence. There is a sense that smoking will become more a ‘poor person’s’ issue as tobacco smoking becomes less socially acceptable. One respondent captured the collective opinion: “Disparities are becoming synonymous with cigarette smoking; you can’t study smoking without sampling people with one or more societal disadvantages.”

Many agreed there will be a continued shift by the Tobacco Industry to e-cigarettes and other emerging non-combustible products, potentially causing shifts in research focus in High Income Countries (HICs), which may influence research funding for Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs).

Respondents shared heightened concerns about the increasing use of e-cigarettes by and their influence on a younger population, as well as the changing societal demographics overall in both HICs and LMICs. Other potential influences on research priorities and/or the direction of research were identified as

- Use of Technology and Social Media (influencing health behaviors)
- FDA/Government Direction and Priorities
- Link between Marijuana, Opioid and Tobacco use

Theme: *Perceived Decline in Research Funding*

Respondents highlighted their concerns about sufficient and sustainable funding for tobacco and nicotine research throughout the entire survey, both from governmental agencies and non-governmental sources.

Among the predictions for impacts on research priorities and thus future funding (as noted previously) were:

- increased focus on harm reduction;
- increases in nicotine addiction based on new products (i.e., e-cigarettes);
- shift in research focus to new forms of tobacco and nicotine use;
- legalization of cannabis and its impact on research (unknown); and
- changing demographics on uses of combustibles vs. non-combustibles.

There is concern that funding will follow new research foci and may shift towards clinical implementation over science, and research priorities will be directed to e-cigarettes and emphasis on harm reduction. The shift in research priorities especially by the FDA was seen as a critical influencer for availability of research funding in the future.

Theme: SRNT Leadership Role

Respondents indicated their desire for SRNT to enhance its leadership role in creating the link between science and policy, thus affirming the importance of SRNT's current mission. Additionally, respondents would like to see SRNT take a stronger role in setting research priorities that provide greater access to funding and become a primary platform for building the overall research network and future leadership.

Respondents identified four areas where they believe SRNT can have an important leadership role in shaping the future of the field. These are:

1. *Engage in advocacy, public policy, education*

Respondents were clear in their aspiration for SRNT to take a significantly amplified role in leading/influencing the research agenda at a public policy level. This will include a more proactive stance in transferring evidence-based knowledge to a broad group of stakeholders including politicians, health care providers, and the general public.

2. *Lead the field in shaping priorities, innovation, access to funding*

There is a clear desire for SRNT to take a more strategic role in shaping the future of the field. From defining networks, to shaping the research and education priorities, there is a significant opportunity for SRNT to position itself and its members as 'game-changers' in the future of the field.

3. *Foster opportunities for cross-disciplinary science, networking, training*

In addition to shaping priorities and encouraging innovation, respondents would like SRNT to increase its role in shaping a broader/stronger network of researchers across the globe through fora, leadership training, and structuring collaborations.

4. *Promote 'best in class' scientific research*

In keeping with the responses emphasizing a stronger 'out front' leadership role is the desire for SRNT to champion and 'set the gold standard' for excellence in unbiased scientific research that is independent from the Tobacco Industry.

SRNT must make clear its position on funding from the SFWF and the Tobacco Industry specifically to research presented at conferences and accepted by the Journal.

Section 2: E-Cigarettes and The Tobacco Industry

Respondents were asked to address three questions about e-cigarettes and the Tobacco Industry (TI), with focus on opinions about e-cigarettes as a divisive issue within the research community and SRNT's membership. The questions were:

1. Do you consider the E-Cigarette Industry to be the same as the Tobacco Industry? Why or why not? Does the ownership of e-cigarette companies matter, i.e., owned by the Tobacco Industry or privately owned?
2. How do you view e-cigarette grant money versus Tobacco Industry funding?
3. Should SRNT consider e-cigarette manufacturers to be part of the Tobacco Industry, and therefore ineligible for membership in the Society, or should e-cigarette manufacturers be allowed to fully participate in Society activities? Does it make a difference if the company is owned by a TI company versus not owned by TI (i.e., JUUL)?*

* Since the survey was conducted, the Tobacco Industry has purchased a substantial share of Juul: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/20/health/juul-reaches-deal-with-tobacco-giant-altria.html?action=click&module=News&pgtype=Homepage>

E-Cigarette Industry = Tobacco Industry?

Responses aligned around two topics: Is the E-cigarette Industry the same as the Tobacco Industry, and does ownership of e-cigarette companies matter?

From these topics arose three areas of consensus:

- Both industries have similar goals regardless of product, so while there may be some differences (i.e., e-cigarettes could be construed as 'harm reduction'), ultimately, they are considered the same because their goals do not align with serving the public's health.
- Transparency of funding sources must absolutely be required in all research studies, reports, presentations, etc.
- Professionals in both the Tobacco Industry and the E-Cigarette Industry must not be allowed membership in SRNT.

There was not, however, consensus about whether the industries are 'the same'.

60% of respondents agreed that the e-cigarette industry is the same as the Tobacco Industry while 40% did not consider the industries as the same, with the rationale that e-cigarettes can be considered 'less harmful' and/or more complex than products from the traditional Tobacco Industry.

The same percentage (40%) also agreed that ownership matters, especially if owned by a tobacco company. Ownership particularly matters from a standpoint of the credibility

of research findings supported by these companies, regulation of products, their similar commercial goals, and the overall impact on public health.

Funding

In terms of the acceptability of e-cigarette grant money versus Tobacco Industry funding, more than half the respondents said that grant funding from e-cigarette companies and the Tobacco Industry should unequivocally be considered as the same.

About 30% of those responding believe there is a difference between accepting E-cigarette Industry or company funding versus that from the Tobacco Industry, saying that funding from e-cigarette companies would be acceptable as long as there was transparency about the funding source.

More than 75% of respondents said they would not accept, or endorse acceptance of, funding from the Tobacco Industry, but that funding from e-cigarette companies could be viewed differently from funding provided through the Tobacco Industry. Several equated e-cigarette funding as similar to funding from pharmaceutical companies (citing the 'harm reduction' factor), noting that there needs to be transparency about sources of funding from e-cigarette companies for research purposes. *

**** This perception may change now that JUUL has TI ownership –underscoring how fluid this situation is.***

Membership Eligibility and/or Participation

In response to questions about whether e-cigarette manufacturers should be eligible for membership, there was consensus among all respondents that no professional from either the E-cigarette Industry or the Tobacco Industry should be eligible for SRNT membership.

In terms of participation in SRNT activities, respondents were split based on the issue of ownership. More than 80% of respondents agreed that if an e-cigarette company is owned by a TI, it should not be allowed to participate in SRNT activities. However, if the e-cigarette company is not owned by a TI, it should be allowed to participate in SRNT activities. Some cited (again) the similarity of independently owned e-cigarette companies to pharmaceutical companies as the basis for allowing participation in SRNT (but not membership).

Section 3: Membership and Other Stakeholders

In this section respondents were asked to address five questions concerning SRNT membership and its role as a scientific society. These were:

1. Historically, SRNT has acted as an open scientific society that accepts research based on peer review. In your opinion, should SRNT remain an open scientific society where all researchers are welcome regardless of place of employment or source of funding, or should SRNT make a shift and become a more closed scientific society with an explicit bias against the Tobacco Industry? Is there a middle ground? Explain your answer.

2. To bridge the gap between researchers and users of research, should SRNT expand its reach and focus beyond research only to provide membership services to groups in related fields? Does that gap need to be bridged by SRNT? Why or why not?
3. Given the fact that 85 percent of SRNT members live/work in the U.S. or Canada, and its limited financial and people resources, how best can SRNT fulfill its mission to stimulate the generation and dissemination of new knowledge concerning nicotine in Europe, Oceania, the Middle East, Latin America, Asia, and Africa?
4. There is a growing concern that SRNT tends to be U.S.-centric, resulting in a perception of SRNT as increasingly irrelevant to our international members. How can SRNT build its relevance to enhance our viability as an international society?
5. If SRNT did not exist, what problems or needs would spur the nicotine/tobacco field of research to establish an "SRNT"? What would be the value and purpose?

Open or Closed Society?

80% of respondents had consensus that the Society should remain open to all researchers, allowing research funded by the TI to be presented and discussed, with the caveat that funding sources for such research be clearly identified. Most agreed that excluding researchers who accept some funding from the TI will be a disservice to the research field. There was emphasis on the importance of all research being held to the same high standards during peer review and acceptance.

There was also agreement that TI professionals should not be allowed membership (a common theme throughout the survey), and a recommendation that SRNT establish some portion of its conferences as closed to Industry participation, allowing researchers to actively indicate where to place their work.

A small percentage (20%) had the opinion that membership and involvement should be 'black and white' with no participation by the TI.

Expand membership to groups in related fields?

Respondents were split on this question, with 50% clearly responding 'no', noting that other organizations are available to take on that role. They believe that SRNT should retain its current focus on research and observed SRNT's limited resources as a barrier to expanding reach or focus beyond what SRNT provides to its current membership base.

40% responded 'maybe', saying that SRNT has an opportunity to enhance its role in bridging the gap through collaboration with other organizations, but should not expand membership to do so. This group did see value in SRNT considering an enhanced role in education and outreach to related fields, but questioned SRNT's capacity to do so. There was also consensus that SRNT should not (necessarily) expand its field of

membership but could consider collaboration with like societies as a way to bridge the gap.

The remaining 10% thought this issue warrants some discussion about the potential value of SRNT expanding its reach and role to include related fields. They would like to see SRNT increase or improve efforts to communicate SRNT members' research to the nicotine and tobacco research field and related fields and consider the inclusion of scientists from other fields into SRNT.

Generation, dissemination of new knowledge in regions outside of North America?

Respondents had thoughtful and interesting ideas in response to this question. There were three main themes emerging from responses:

1. *Increase and diversify financial, other resource support*

Ideas ranged from increased scholarship support for Conference attendance to making the Conference more widely available through technology (not depending on in-person attendance as the sole means of participation). SRNT's capacity will be an issue.

2. *Facilitate global networks and/or access to researchers in other countries*

Responses indicated the desire to increase global participation through networking and access to information and training. SRNT University was cited as a way to increase outreach, as well as more deliberate efforts to advance the participation of international researchers on panels and other Conference sessions.

3. *Expand Support for Chapters*

Supporting the establishment of global Chapters is viewed as a potentially successful strategy to increase outreach to and involvement by non-North American countries in SRNT.

Enhance relevance and viability as an international society

Responses primarily indicated a desire for SRNT to be more relevant on the international stage and provided ideas and recommendations for building SRNT's viability (and visibility) as an international society. This included a greater presence at global meetings and collaboration with international societies. There were several references to increasing the involvement of international researchers in the Society through augmenting their participation in conferences and in SRNT governance. Use of technology to develop networks to facilitate exchange of information and ideas was also cited.

IF SRNT did not exist...what would cause its formation today?

This question did not resonate for many of the respondents, and most answered within the context of what already exists under the SRNT banner.

With that said, many cited problems or needs that would spur creation of an “SRNT” as lack of opportunities for collaboration with other scientists, the dissemination and communication of scientific findings, and the rising use of tobacco and tobacco products that impact the public health.

In terms of purpose and value, the following were cited as most important: dedicated network of scientists, collaboration among peers, a trusted forum for sharing and disseminating research findings, and a deliberate focus on the science and research outcomes.

Many comments noted the important role of promoting collaboration and networking among peer scientists. Additionally, supporting the dissemination of unbiased research on nicotine and tobacco as well as providing a forum for exchange of information were noted as critical attributes for a membership association.

Conclusion

While there were clear themes – and consensus -- emerging from this initial Stakeholder survey, there was also equivocation in a number of areas.

The role and influence of the Tobacco and E-Cigarette Industries on the research field is a concern to many, especially as they relate to their connection to SRNT. And respondents were clear that ownership does matter.

For example, respondents were clear that they did not want SRNT to allow professional non-researchers from either the Tobacco or E-Cigarette Industries to become members of the Society regardless of ownership. However, there was a division in terms of whether professional non-researchers from e-Cigarette companies should be allowed to participate in Society activities. About **half** said ‘not under any circumstance’ regardless of ownership, the **other half** believe that participation by non-researchers should be allowed but only if the e-cigarette company is not owned by a tobacco company. There was agreement that researchers funded by the TI and E-Cigarette Industry should be accepted for membership, but disagreement whether their research should be presented.

This is one area where SRNT could benefit from a clear position on membership and participation by the Tobacco and E-Cigarette Industries.

Another area representative of both consensus and division was the question of SRNT as an ‘open’ research society. While an overwhelming majority of respondents affirmed that SRNT should remain an open society welcoming all researchers regardless of funding source, in the questions specific to accepting funding from the Tobacco and/or E-cigarette Industries there was strong feeling that such funding was ‘suspect’ and research funded specifically from the Tobacco Industry should not be accepted.

There did not seem to be a clear understanding across the respondents of SRNT’s current policies around membership or its culture as an ‘open’ research society. Again, SRNT could benefit from enhanced clarity in this area.

Respondents were clearly concerned about what they viewed as the increasingly divisive nature of the research field, primarily driven by disagreement about whether or not it is appropriate for researchers to accept grant funding from the Tobacco Industry or the E-Cigarette Industry. The establishment of the Smoke Free World Foundation (SFWF) with a one-billion dollar grant from Phillip Morris is exacerbating the division as researchers in the field vie for smaller pools of grant funding, and as research priorities appear to shift.

E-cigarettes and the rapid introduction of these and other non-combustible products into the marketplace was highlighted as a critical issue, impacting both research focus, funding and researcher capacity to respond to the advent of new products. The impact

in LMICs was cited as less direct than in HICs, though some felt that greater focus on this area of research in HICs could have a negative effect for LMICs in terms of decreased research dollars.

SRNT's leadership role is seen as critical to shaping the future of the field of nicotine and tobacco research. Even when not specifically asked for, respondents noted where they believed SRNT could or should lead in terms of setting research priorities, enhancing access to funding, and mitigating the division among researchers driven by the influences of the Tobacco Industry (in particular).

The thoroughness of the responses in this Stakeholder Survey indicate a strong level of support for SRNT and the SRNT 2025 project.

**SRNT 2025: Phase I
Stakeholder Survey Report
Detailed Analysis: Questions 1 - 7**

SECTION 1: THE FUTURE OF RESEARCH

Question 1: What are the three most significant challenges facing today's nicotine and tobacco field of research. What will have to happen to overcome these challenges?

Summary

There were six primary challenges identified by respondents, with the top two being Divisiveness in the Research Field and the Quality of Science, and Rapid Changes in the Tobacco and Nicotine Marketplace.

Other areas of concern centered on funding for research, communication of the science to the community and legislators, lack of resources for research in LMICs. Interestingly, respondents had fewer comments directed specifically towards the influence of the Tobacco Industry. It is reasonable to assume that the comments related to the rapidly changing marketplace assumed influence by the Tobacco Industry.

Respondents provided input about opportunities for SRNT action in overcoming the challenges identified. These included having SRNT provide clear guidance on research priorities, increased policy advocacy with regulatory agencies, enhanced communication and dissemination efforts, greater inclusion across the globe, and collaboration with other scientific societies.

Challenges

1. Divisiveness in the Field and the Quality of Science
2. Rapid Changes in the Tobacco and Nicotine Marketplace (E-cigarettes and other tobacco and nicotine products coming to the marketplace so fast the research cannot keep up)
3. Decreasing Access to Research Funding
4. Translation/Communication of Science to a Broader Audience (public, policy makers, healthcare providers)
5. Global Needs
6. Influence of the Tobacco Industry

SYNOPSIS WITH COMMENTS

Challenge: Divisiveness in the Field and the Quality of Science

Responses indicated divisions among researchers primarily attributed to collaboration of colleagues with the Tobacco Industry, spurred by the advent of e-cigarettes and vaping. The differing judgements between those who believe e-cigarettes represent 'harm reduction' versus those who take a zero tolerance stance towards any tobacco and nicotine products appear to be at the base of the division.

Other concerns related to what some saw as a decline in 'professionalism' and the quality of the science being done across the field, as well as lack of consensus on priorities for research.

Comments

- 'Pure' science and interpretation of data versus science to drive policy positions.
- Deterioration in the scientific enterprise such that challenges to established ideas and approaches are seen more as indicators of disloyalty to the public health-boosting goals of reducing preventable premature death and disease instead of good faith efforts to advance and improve the overall science base.
- Increasing dynamic of orthodoxy vs. heresy as opposed to a less charged marketplace of ideas, data and their interpretation.
- The debates about tobacco harm reduction has fractured the tobacco control community of scientists.
- There has never been a bigger rift in our field than now due to the advent and advocacy of e-cigarettes and vaping and the collaboration of colleagues with the tobacco industry.
- "Ideology ahead of evidence"-- It is important that good science prevails.
- Division within the nicotine and tobacco research community in relation to the place of tobacco harm reduction and engagement with the tobacco industry.
- Division on whether e-cigarettes are 'safer' so acceptable, and work that is published by NTR.
- Relationships with tobacco/vaping industry is becoming a pressing issue; no clear guidance from SRNT.
- The availability of sufficient numbers of suitably skilled and supported researchers in particular in LMI nations
- Decline in clinician scientist representation and the need for recruiting new clinical scientists to the field.
- The breakdown of transdisciplinary research team science outside of the FDA-funded centers
- The professionalism of the field is drowning in personal preferences rather than quality science and value for good scientific work.
- Peer review and the quality of the science
- Research priorities and balance
- Too few mechanisms for developing consensus on measures, methods, and perhaps most important-research priorities for the field.

Opportunity: *Divisiveness in the Field and the Quality of Science*

SRNT should provide clear guidance on research priorities and methods for defining 'common ground' for SRNT member researchers, with particular focus on relationships with the Tobacco Industry.

Comments

- SRNT take an active role in bringing different 'tribes' together for a respectful discussion about harm reduction.
- SRNT provide clear guidance/position on relationships with the Tobacco Industry; develop a position statement.
- Blanket ban on any presentations at meetings or other forums by anyone funded either directly or indirectly by the tobacco industry.
- Encourage the FDA to establish an independent body to help define research priorities and directions
- Support processes/mechanisms that foster more open and broader lines of inquiry; avoid traps of placing too much weight on positions that have 'always been that way'.
- Revival of professional etiquette and ethics

Challenge: *Rapid Changes in the Tobacco and Nicotine Marketplace*

Respondents noted that the tobacco product industry is evolving at a rapid pace which makes it difficult to conduct and document harms or safety of the products. E-cigarettes, vaping, and the lack of regulation are major concerns as the Industry changes; most felt it was unknown what impact these products will have on public health and that research is not able to keep up.

Comments

- The fast pace of launching new tobacco /nicotine products that is beyond the capacity of researchers to conduct and document evidence on harms or safety of products.
- The rapidly changing landscape of unregulated nicotine products available on the market.
- Increasing different forms of tobacco products
- Hyper-evolving tobacco product industry makes it hard for nicotine/tobacco scientist to keep up.
- Ever expanding tobacco product landscape
- Increasing overlap between cannabis and tobacco products. Tobacco researchers will need to be educated and able to address cannabis in their research.
- Dual use: as e-cigarettes grow in popularity and other novel tobacco products come to market, dual use is likely and it becomes difficult to rigorously measure and study smoking behavior and smoking outcomes.
- How electronic cigarettes (ENDS) and Heat not burn products will impact smoking cessation

- What role these products will play in harm reduction strategies and how to generate the clinical data needed to understand the appropriate role of these tobacco products in smoking cessation.
- Need to increase e-cigarette research and create policies regarding e-cigarettes
- Regulation of e-cigarettes and overall increases in e-cigarette use
- Trend to push harm reduction as a global response to TC even in LMICs that are at early stage of the epidemic with low use rates

Opportunity: ***Rapid Changes in the Tobacco and Nicotine Marketplace***

Increased policy advocacy with regulatory agencies to be more responsive in getting studies out based on the changing marketplace with a focus on e-cigarettes.

Comments

- Policy advocacy to ensure productive regulation to prevent, more timely public education and funding.
- SRNT leverage their successful strategies for impacting science and policy to reduce the tobacco burden to help cannabis scientists do the same.
- FDA needs to restrict the introduction of new products immediately so that researchers can adequately assess consumer safety issues.
- FDA and NIDA reconsider funding mechanisms to reflect a broader, more responsive set of processes to get studies out before the issues are moot
- NIH needs to improve and enhance its study sections to include communication experts.

Challenge: ***Decreasing Access to Research Funding***

Concern about sufficient and sustainable funding for tobacco and nicotine research, both from governmental agencies and non-governmental sources, was a consistent theme.

Comments

- The perception that the tobacco problem has been ‘solved’ in high income countries; this is causing difficulties in attracting research funding in the field of tobacco and nicotine research.
- Sustainable extramural funding for investigator-initiated clinical research
- Funding is at least temporarily on the decline.
- Continued inadequate funding for tobacco control research and surveillance in high income and LMI countries.
- Ensuring there is sufficient funding beyond the mandate of what the FDA is allowed to work on.
- Limited research funding from government and private sources.
- There is an apparent conflict of interest with the FDA receiving monies from tobacco industry.
- How to best take advantage of the substantial resources being committed by the FDA and NIH to support research even when the explicit focus of such research is to advance the regulatory science base for FDA to rely upon for its work.

- Particularly unbiased/non-industry funding for science; there are more gifted scientists and well-designed research proposals than there is readily available funding.

Opportunity: *Decreasing Access to Research Funding*

SRNT should increase advocacy for funds from federal government and agencies (NIH, FDA) and consider non-governmental funding mechanisms.

Comments

- SRNT should support dissemination of most innovative findings, facilitate training and networking of investigators to increase competitively-fundable scientists.
- SRNT needs to make sure the research portfolio is balanced in its meetings and advocate for funding in these areas with NIH.
- SRNT should consider developing or expanding funding mechanisms to self-fund members' research.
- SRNT should meet with NIH leadership to discuss how their funding can prioritize work that cannot be funded through FDA money.
- SRNT should work to help prioritize government funding for nicotine dependence research and basic research to understand new targets (related to e-cigarettes; non-combustibles).
- SRNT should enhance its efforts to maintain/increase awareness amongst policymakers and funders that smoking remains a significant concern, particularly amongst high risk populations.

Challenge: *Translation/Communication of Science to a Broader Audience*

The collective theme for the challenge of translating science to use by the public, policy makers, and healthcare professionals (among others) is the fundamental importance of evidence-based information that informs policy and healthcare. Responses indicated a need for a more dedicated focus to this challenge.

Comments

- Providing useful information while staying true to the science and data.
- Engagement of health care professionals to increase tobacco/nicotine cessation efforts
- Lack of rapid and rigorous studies by TCORS that delays critical dissemination of findings.
- Large and increasing need to synthesize large bodies of scientific findings into meaningful and actionable policies and interventions.
- How to best and appropriately communicate findings from research to the broader public in a way that retains fidelity to the research but also provides the public with useful and relevant information.
- Establishing/sustaining a presence in state/national legislatures to reinforce evidence-based practices for reducing nicotine/tobacco related harm.
- Research needs to provide evidence base for policy implementation.

- Lack of understanding of digital communication by study sections. FDA and NIDA should reconsider its funding mechanisms to reflect a broader, more responsive set of processes to get studies out before the issues are moot.
- Advances in using technology are sorely lacking in the health-related sciences.

Opportunity: *Translation/Communication of Science to a Broader Audience*

SRNT should increase efforts to create communication forums, resources, and dissemination methods.

Comments

- Build connections to broader areas of the scientific community
- Build additional communication forums
- Facilitate members communicating findings to lay audience, policy makers and healthcare providers.
- Increase access to resources and expertise on best practices for scientific communication; SRNT develop a ‘Good housekeeping Seal of Approval’-type approach (<https://healthjournalism.org>).
- Efforts like SRNT University prioritized and continue to receive funding support.
- SRNT should develop and continue to support dissemination efforts to state and national legislatures.

Challenge: *Global Needs*

Respondents highlighted the rising epidemic of tobacco use in LMICs with little funding or resources for research, as well as a dearth of national or local policies to control tobacco and nicotine use.

Comments

- Increasing smoking prevalence in LMI countries
- Little research done in LMI countries
- Lack of understanding or need, lack of capacity and know-how in the field of research, and/or lack of financial support to researchers in developing countries to get involved in research on products that are specific to their regions.
- The tobacco epidemic is rising in LMI countries. These countries have little in the way of funding and resources for developing tobacco and nicotine research agendas and programs.
- Many countries (like China and India) still have no nation-wide smoke-free policy.
- Expanding the field to meet global needs.
- Inequity in research resources relative to the burden of tobacco use in LMIC as compared to HIC.

Opportunity: *Global Needs*

SRNT should increase its efforts to expand membership to promote greater inclusion across the globe and collaborate with multinational organizations to seek governmental support in LMICs.

Challenge: ***Influence of the Tobacco Industry***

Involvement of the Tobacco Industry in research on nicotine and tobacco (funding and dissemination of research), and scientist relationships with the Tobacco Industry were cited as the primary issues.

Comments

- The activities of the tobacco industry and its allies, which work to ensure that nicotine and tobacco research findings are ignored, discredited, discounted, and/or not implemented.
- Scientist relationships with tobacco industry
- Legalization of marijuana and potential for TI to enter into that marketplace
- TI funded research (Smoke Free World Foundation)
- Fierce involvement of the tobacco industry in the field of research which is resulting in publishing information that could be misleading to practitioners in the field.
- The relationship between SRNT and the TI/alternative tobacco entities and the historically classical SRNT member groups
- Tobacco Industry interference.

Opportunity: ***Influence of the Tobacco Industry***

Collaborate with other scientific societies to identify ways to address the current political administration's favoring of tobacco business over scientific research.

Comments

- LMICs investing in traditional demand reduction strategies.
- The field needs to determine the best way to measure e-cigarette use; will be important for measurement to be consistent across investigators.
- At NTR remove editors who have taken partisan positions on e-cigarettes and other new products.
- Re-establish NTR as a neutral communications channel on issues.

Question 2: In your opinion, how will the nicotine and tobacco research field be different in 10 years?

SUMMARY

Five areas were cited as the most potentially significant areas of change for the nicotine and tobacco research field in the next 10 years, specifically:

1. Impacts on Research Priorities and Directed Funding
2. Diversification of Tobacco Products
3. Globalization/Technology
4. Focus on LMICs
5. New Generation of Scientists

These responses in many ways mirror the challenges cited in Question 1, especially the divisiveness in the field around e-cigarettes and funding sources. The greatest number

of comments centered on potential impacts on funding for research as well as research priorities that direct funding.

SYNOPSIS WITH COMMENTS

Impacts on Research Priorities and Directed Funding

Among the predictions for impacts on research priorities and funding were: increased focus on harm reduction; increases in nicotine addiction based on new products (e-cigarettes); shift in research focus to new forms of tobacco and nicotine use; legalization of cannabis and its impact on research (unknown); and changing demographics on uses of combustibles vs. non-combustibles. There is concern that funding will follow new research foci and may shift towards clinical implementation over science, and research priorities will be directed to e-cigarettes and emphasis on harm reduction.

Comments

- HIC: less tobacco, more nicotine addiction with more emphasis understanding the long term effects of nicotine per se.
- Increased sense of urgency to end the tobacco epidemic.
- Increased concern with nicotine addiction rather than smoking as many of our target patients will develop dependence on other forms of nicotine delivery devices.
- Research field may switch to spending more dollars studying e-cigarettes and other tobacco products and harm reduction strategies.
- In US we could all be operating in a place where mandated reductions in the nicotine content of cigarettes has rendered them minimally or non-addictive.
- Focus will change towards the research of newer methods of nicotine delivery and in finding more effective cessation therapies.
- The 'geography' and 'demographics' of research could shift based on certain countries enjoying a decline in prevalence while others suffer from sharp rises (in tobacco use).
- With the TI putting more force behind non-conventional forms of tobacco use there will be a shift in the focus of research potentially away from cigarettes and more into new forms.
- The legalization of cannabis in certain countries will open more doors for research on dual use or other concepts that may have not been possible while cannabis was not legal.
- Greater emphasis on tobacco harm reduction research for smokers in high prevalence groups
- How to better reach marginalized population groups with high smoking prevalence with effective interventions.
- It will be a divided profession. Public health professionals and those not trained in public health will seek to go in their own directions rather than be integrated.
- There will need to be more research on the non-addictive effects of nicotine in terms of promotion (if not causation) of other diseases.
- Research will be richer.
- Headway will be made with individualized treatment and personalized medicine.

- Hope for more collaborative interdisciplinary inter-institutional, and international research collaboration.
- Needs to be true partnerships in research and research capacity building.
- Funding climate for basic, clinical and translational research in our field may become more limited with a shift to clinical implementation and policy science.
- Concern that the transdisciplinary culture of the TTURC era will atrophy as more funding goes to health services and policy researchers.—this will leave a generation of clinical scientists out of funding opportunities and can slow population health advances because of less sophisticated integrative knowledge.

Diversification of Tobacco Products

Many respondents cited the rapidity in which more diverse tobacco and nicotine products are being brought to market,; noting more diverse products and patterns of use will make it necessary for the research field to react to the changing landscape of multiple product use.

Comments

- The face of tobacco products is changing in the US. May begin to see if there are toxicities posed by alternative tobacco products that we had not yet considered
- More diversity of tobacco products on the market and likely more diverse patterns of use
- Marijuana may be marketed alongside tobacco products and/or in tobacco products
- Tobacco and nicotine products will likely be even more numerous than today; researchers will have to coordinate more efficiently to maximize research dollar investment.
- Better understanding of the benefit/risks of various tobacco products
- Many more tobacco products on the market and a wider variety of tobacco product use and combination of use of multiple tobacco products
- There will be a plethora of new tobacco treatment products and services.
- Use of combustible cigarettes will likely continue to decline mirrored by an increase in the use of alternative tobacco products.
- Field will both narrow and broaden to react to the changing landscape of multiple product use.
- This product diversification makes it more difficult for consumers to make beneficial choices, and for researchers to explain mechanisms and develop effective interventions.
- Prevention and treatment efforts will need to adapt to the changing landscape of increased use of dual products

Globalization/Technology

About 20% of respondents noted that a greater use of technology will impact research methods and goals and will most likely be utilized to control tobacco use/cessation. One respondent called for the creation of a global network of researchers and

advocates to monitor industry activities 'in real time', linking it to the rapid diversification of tobacco and nicotine products.

Comments

- Globalization and increased pace of technological innovation will likely require changes in research methods and goals
- More efforts towards personalized medicine and greater use of technology to control tobacco use, increased effective cessation tools.
- Digital tools will be more prominent in shaping understanding of the predictors of smoking and quitting behavior; therefore, research collaborations between health researchers and computer scientists will be essential.
- More IT technologies will be applied to help with tobacco cessation
- Global network of researchers and advocates needs to be created to monitor industry activities in real time.
- The most important innovations in programs and policy will occur at the national level.

Low- and Middle-Income Countries

About 20% of respondents focused on the issues in LMICs, noting the future impact will be greater health disparities. While this is seen as a negative impact, those responding in this area also believe there will be a greater research emphasis that can build capacity to address tobacco and nicotine use in LMICs.

Comments

- Global health disparities.
- Tobacco research may become more focused on issues and interventions in developing countries, which has potential to change research funding priorities and needs globally.
- Continued threat of tobacco to LMICs, increasing global health disparities.
- More efforts to build capacity to conduct research.
- Greater research emphasis on LMICs where tobacco use remains a significant concern.
- Critical mass of think tanks needs to be created in LMICS to support evidence-based policy making.

New Generation of Scientists

While there were only a few comments specifically in this area, it is noteworthy as there were other secondary threads in comments in Question 1 (challenges and opportunities) emphasizing the future need for younger scientists to provide leadership in the field with new ideas and approaches to research.

Comments

- Greater participation and leadership from the younger generation of scientists
- Greater openness to differing views
- New ideas and thinking from younger more junior individuals

Question 3: What are the societal changes that can (will) influence the type of research our members currently do?

SUMMARY

Five areas of societal change that may influence future research done by Society members were highlighted by respondents (In order of greatest to least):

1. Socioeconomic Health Disparities
2. Increasing Use of E-Cigarettes and Other Non-smoke Products
3. Technology and Social Media (influence on health behaviors)
4. FDA/Government Direction and Priorities
5. Link between Marijuana, Opioid, and Tobacco use

Socioeconomic health disparities by far was the focus of more than half of the respondents, noting changing demographics in both HICs and LMICs as influencers. Respondents also shared heightened concerns about the increasing use of e-cigarettes and its influence on a younger population, as well as use of technology and social media that can both help and harm public health.

SYNOPSIS WITH COMMENTS

Socioeconomic Health Disparities

Most respondents predict a widening gap in public health, specifically that there will be greater tobacco-related inequities existing across the world based on poverty, mental health, and drug dependence. There is a sense that smoking will become more a 'poor person's' issue as tobacco smoking becomes less socially acceptable. One respondent captured the collective opinion: "Disparities are becoming synonymous with cigarette smoking; you can't study smoking without sampling people with one or more societal disadvantages."

Comments

- Changing demographics of tobacco users and changing societal demographics.
- Biggest issue in Western society is the social gradient in tobacco use and its consequences.
- Greater health disparities
- A more politically energized and informed younger generation of voters may push local, state ballot initiatives that will affect tobacco/nicotine exposure and interventions.
- The burden of smoking is highest among individuals with psychiatric, socioeconomic, and health disparities – so research efforts more likely to remain focused in these populations.
- Greater tobacco-related inequities existing across the world with tobacco smoking increasingly being a poor person's and poor countries' problem.
- Widening socioeconomic disparities will continue to grow, leading to increasing numbers of people in poverty with comorbidities such as mental health and drug

dependence, adding to the complexity and challenge of doing research, and evaluating interventions.

- Climate change will continue to have its effects with increasing number of 'climate migrants'; our researchers need to be culturally competent, adaptable and creative.
- Demographics of nicotine and tobacco users are shifting towards younger, less white, more male, and less educated individuals. More research is needed to address persistent health disparities, community engagement, and cultural competency.
- If socioeconomic-racial/ethnic divides continue we will continue to do research on tobacco-related health disparities rather than find a solution.
- Shifts in the behavior of the population (e.g., since many youth are using e-cigs, the funders have supported research on youth e-cig use and hence research has advanced). If new epidemiological shifts occur, that will influence our research.
- Disparities are becoming synonymous with cigarette smoking; you can't study smoking without sampling people with 1 or more societal disadvantages. If social inequities enlarge due to social and economic shifts we will have to address disparities head on and they will shift from subspecialty of nicotine and tobacco research to part of the field itself.
- Changes in knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors related to both combustible and non-combustible products will influence research efforts.
- Tobacco use will continue to be less and less socially acceptable; the burden will be increasingly concentrated among people with mental illness and other marginalized groups.
- Universal (or lack of) access to healthcare

Increasing Use of E-Cigarettes and Other Non-smoke Products

Respondents believe there will be an increasing use of e-cigarettes and other non-combustible products as smoking combustibles becomes less socially acceptable, and non-combustible products are seen as less harmful. The trend towards use of e-cigarettes among youth in particular is an area of concern as e-cigarettes and other non-combustible products become more available.

Comments

- Rising use of e-cigarettes among youth suggests that more needs to be done to discover the potential harm of vaping in its own right.
- Increasing openness to the use of nicotine in the absence of smoke (will lead to) more research on the broader array of consequences of such use.
- More acceptance of less harmful products for smokers
- Combustible cigarette use will continue to decline; use of other non-combustible tobacco use will increase.
- Non-combustible tobacco use will be more socially acceptable leading to more research on these products.
- Massive increased usage of e-cigarettes.

- Increasingly strong public support for nicotine reduction in combustible product that will lead to increased support for alternative and less harm forms of nicotine delivery.
- There is a problem with the perception of the new electronic products as safe and 'clean', creating a challenge in fighting against that image created to attract new smokers.
- Changes in the tobacco use landscape influenced by change product type and availability.

Technology and Social Media

There was agreement that the increasing access to and use of technology by the general public will influence health behaviors, including providing diverse avenues for treatment and dissemination of information.

Comments

- Society is increasingly comfortable with looking toward social media, wearables, and other mobile/computing technologies for health behavior change.
- Globalization and an increased pace of technological innovation
- Continued impact of social media
- Greater use of technology and patients will have their genes analyzed to help inform treatment.
- Digital/mobile health
- Mobile health and social media research will continue to grow because of its reach and scalability to millennials and GenZ.
- The rapidly increasing saturation rate of mobile devices.
- Increasing advancement of electronic medical records and efforts to identify and treat tobacco users broadly
- Increase avenues for treatment dissemination via e-health

FDA/Government Direction and Priorities

The FDA's direction of research funding priorities will be influenced by the current political climate as well as the increasing trend towards e-cigarette use, thus impacting the research being done by Society members.

Comments

- Research is driven by the agencies that fund it. Ideally these agencies respond to public health trends.
- Budget pressures on state and federal government.
- The direction FDA takes with harm reduction products will greatly influence our members' research because of available research funds.
- Funding sources available; what is prioritized and what is not funded.
- Policy/regulatory proposals that are under discussion and those actually enacted.
- FDA regulation will necessitate more Modified Risk Tobacco Products (MRTP) studies on exposure and harm.
- Political leadership will influence what FDA can and cannot do.

- Economic health of different countries impacting national/federal funding of research and healthcare

Link between Marijuana, Opioid, and Tobacco use

As one respondent so aptly wrote: “The advent of marijuana legalization which will likely continue to expand has important implications for tobacco”. Those responding emphasized that the linkages between marijuana, opioid, and tobacco use may have an impact on research direction and priorities.

Comments

- Steady march of decriminalization of cannabis use will put behaviors more on SRNT researchers’ radars
- FDA regulation, marijuana legalization and increased funding for opioid research/interventions are likely to have significant impacts on research.
- Potential for tobacco control efforts to inform both marijuana and opioid responses.
- Marijuana legalization and increased use of electronic nicotine delivery systems will necessitate more poly substance use research.
- The advent of marijuana legalization which will likely continue to expand has important implications for tobacco. The gateway is reversed; now in many places youth start with marijuana and add tobacco. Like e-cigarettes, youth see marijuana as harmless or good for you; this perception leads to increased use.

General Comments

- Cross-disciplinary research; go outside of traditional disciplines and measurement tools to include more engineering skills as we begin to better understand nicotine delivery devices and dynamics of aerosol delivery.
- More need for cross-border research.

Question 4: What should be SRNT’s role in shaping the future of the field?

SUMMARY

Respondents identified four areas where they believe SRNT can have an important leadership role in shaping the future of the field. These are:

1. Engage in advocacy, public policy, education
2. Lead the field in shaping priorities, innovation, access to funding
3. Foster opportunities for cross-disciplinary science, networking, training
4. Promote ‘best in class’ scientific research

Respondents indicated their desire for SRNT to take a lead role in creating the link between science and policy, thus emphasizing the importance of SRNT’s current mission. Additionally, respondents would like to see SRNT take a stronger role in setting research priorities that provide greater access to funding and become a primary platform for building the overall research network and future leadership.

SYNOPSIS WITH COMMENTS

Engage in advocacy, public policy, education

Respondents were clear in their aspiration for SRNT to take a significantly amplified role in leading/influencing the research agenda at a public policy level. This will include a more proactive stance in transferring evidence-based knowledge to a broad group of stakeholders including politicians, health care providers, and the general public.

Comments

- Develop, identify, and support methods to engage the public, policy, and regulatory bodies in the science of nicotine and tobacco.
- Be a respected voice on nicotine and tobacco control science and its program and policy implications around the world.
- Increase activities to transfer evidence-based knowledge to politicians and other stakeholders (general public)
- Educate the public about tobacco products and their effects based on evidence from members' research.
- Active policy and platform statements determined by members.
- Proactive public stance on key issues related to tobacco policy. (Policy makers look to SRNT as the authority on scientific information).
- Create scientific background and advocate for improved regulation on tobacco and nicotine products.
- Continue its role guiding and influencing policy and tobacco treatment with scientific evidence.
- Advocate for research-based tobacco control.
- Engage with the public and regulatory entities.
- More proactive evidence-based proposals to influence policy makers such as policy roadmaps.
- More education of the public.
- Greater involvement in policy and providing direct mechanisms for SRNT members to influence policy with education.

Lead the field in shaping priorities, innovation, access to funding

There is a clear desire for SRNT to take a more strategic role in shaping the future of the field. From defining networks, to shaping the research and education priorities, there is a significant opportunity for SRNT to position the itself and its members as 'game-changers' in the future of the field.

Comments

- Broaden the scope of SRNT to address how tobacco programs and policies are applicable to other health issues where there is increasing attention.
- Do more to address multiple substance use in our interventions; cannot leave tobacco treatment in a silo.

- Have sessions focused on innovation and the future of tobacco and nicotine research (shape the field)
- Identify priorities for funding and obtain commitments of funding to address those priorities.
- SRNT take a stronger stand in preventing the support of researchers of the tobacco industry and its subsidiaries.
- Play a leading role in helping advance the translation of regulatory science research for decision makers around the world.
- Promote researchers and their findings.
- Lead the way positively through continuous change with the basics—educating the global research workforce; building/strengthening global networks; advocating for adequate resources to meet needs.
- Redefine its values and take positions on hard issues.
- Technology: the level of social transactions on social media even in LMICs will influence the type of research members do going forward.

Foster opportunities for cross-disciplinary science, networking, training

In addition to shaping priorities and encouraging innovation, respondents would like SRNT to increase its role in shaping a broader/stronger network of researchers across the globe through fora, leadership training, and structuring collaborations.

Comments

- Create fora (meetings, journals, networks) where viewpoint diversity is valued and sought.
- Convener for diverse research and training purposes.
- Provide opportunities for people to develop personal working relationships and friendships that do so much to promote science.
- Key training ground for new scientific and public health leadership in the field.
- Provide the forum to keep members up to date on current issues and controversies.
- Provide leadership positions for trainees and work with SRNT-U to train future leaders in the field of tobacco research.
- Encourage collaborations between leaders in the field to provide better information that translates science for smoother dissemination to the public.
- Remove barriers between scientists from different fields.
- Support training, networking/collaborations, and dissemination to facilitate future cutting-edge research.
- Facilitate linkages between HIC and LMIC scientists.
Expand reach in developing, non-English-speaking tobacco burdened countries to help shift the 'center of gravity' for tobacco and nicotine research in the world.

Promote 'best in class' scientific research

In keeping with the responses emphasizing a stronger 'out front' leadership role for SRNT for the field is the desire for SRNT to champion and 'set the gold standard' for excellence in unbiased scientific research.

Comments

- Represent a non-biased entity that promotes research for the good of public health. Free of bias.
- Protect and promote the highest quality science.
- Continue doing independent high quality research.
- Reflect a more balanced agenda in highlighting research efforts across the continuum of tobacco use. Maintain a broad view of highlighting research related to many tools (given myopic focus on harm reduction at the last conference).
- Set the gold standard for excellence in scientific research.

Question 5: How will the influence of the tobacco industry impact and/or change the field of research on nicotine and tobacco?

SUMMARY

There were three key areas identified about how the influence of the Tobacco Industry might impact and/or change the field of research on nicotine and tobacco.

They are:

1. Tobacco Industry influence on research
2. Results of Tobacco Industry influence
3. Tobacco Industry influence will continue; it's not all bad

The first two areas are aligned as they address both what respondents see as *indicators* of Tobacco Industry influence, and then what the *results* of that influence can be. The third category of responses offers the opinion that the Tobacco Industry's influence is not entirely negative as it will push vigilance on the research agenda.

SYNOPSIS WITH COMMENTS

Tobacco Industry influence on research

Respondents were primarily in agreement on their opinions that the Tobacco Industry will continue to provide its own research to influence public policy and regulation. The TI's goal is to increase profits and expand product lines for that purpose, and the SFWF will influence focus of research based on the size of potential funding that will be available. Many observed that the current field is in reactionary mode to the Tobacco Industry's ramping up of new products and its research around those products.

Comments

- The Tobacco Industry's goal of transitioning to smokeless tobacco products in the US appears to already be shaping FDA-funded research on nicotine and tobacco.
- With FDA proposed policies, expect great legal challenges from the tobacco industry.
- The tobacco industry has a big influence because if they put out new products, we respond by conducting research on those products.

- Will influence research directly or indirectly in order to maximize their profit. Big threats are initiatives like the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World and temptation of researchers to accept funding from the industry.
- The TI will continue its efforts to undermine research findings, delay/prevent dissemination of evidence-based interventions, and limit the research questions that are funded.
- TI will influence the research field through internal research and research funding for independent scientists.
- Will use its influence to 'grow' its business ...by using influential scientists, clinicians and researchers to lobby on their behalf at SRNT forums.
- Will continue to seek a seat at the harm reduction table with government, researchers and civil society.
- Influenced by the fast pace of launching new tobacco/nicotine products that is beyond the capacity of researchers to conduct and document evidence on harms or safety of products.
- The wide variety of products available adds to the research burden as results on one product are not necessarily generalizable to other products of the same class/category.
- Fierce involvement of the industry in the field of research (Foundation for a Smoke-Free World) can result in the publishing of misleading information.
- The shift toward non-combustibles has created a whole new field of research under the umbrella of nicotine and tobacco research.
- The tobacco industry will likely cash in on legalization of marijuana, influence FDA to delay nicotine reduction, and continue to influence local and national efforts around sound tobacco control legislation.
- The research field will be impacted to the degree such industry efforts change the tobacco use landscape, impact populations of users, influence investigators.
- The industry would become more influential with enrollment of traditional TC researchers on their research programs through funding to be provided by the PMI's funded smoke-free world foundation.

Results of Tobacco Industry influence

Respondents remarked on their concern about what is seen as the 'co-opting' of researchers by the Tobacco Industry because of access to funding (primarily). They also commented that the Tobacco Industry will continue to use its connections and efforts to shape the future of research, and to be viewed as "part of the solution".

Comments

- Researchers who are well aware of the policies that have reduced smoking are promoting at high profile meetings, including SRNT, that vapor products not be taxed or regulated in order to promote their use.
- Tobacco industry and NTR are duopolies of sorts that drive each other forward. As one pivots, the other will/does.
- There is now awareness of the need to protect science from the self-interest of industry.

- There will be many researchers who are increasingly comfortable doing work for the tobacco industry on noncombustible tobacco products.
- Some researchers have already been co-opted by tobacco industry; with this influence people will be silenced and research compromised.
- Given the depth and breadth of industry efforts to impact tobacco use patterns, their efforts will be central to shaping research. SRNT members should vote on whether and to what extent industry personnel can participate in SRNT activities.
- The industry will continue its efforts to be 'part of the solution' while continuing to market its toxic products. SRNT is viewed as the most sympathetic legitimate scientific organization to the tobacco companies.

Tobacco Industry influence will continue; it's not all bad

The responses in this category took a broader view of the Tobacco Industry's influence and ultimate impact on the field of research, noting that the results of Industry-driven research can be informative and also enhance vigilance within the field.

Comments

- Involvement of the TI not entirely negative. Exchange and discussion of studies and their results can be informative for both industry and non-industry researchers. In the future there will be more dialogue between non-industry and industry researchers.
- TI will continue to invest in finding new approaches around the regulations
- While we should remain vigilant, we shouldn't allow the TI to distract us from our mission to create the science that will help smokers quit; should not change our focus on being about the science.
- Positive in its influence.
- Over time, the quality of research conducted by the tobacco industry would increasingly be judged as worthy of evaluation on its methods and merits as opposed to a presumption of 'being wrong' because of the funder.

Question 6: How will the Tobacco Industry's shift from combustibles to e-cigarettes in Higher-Income Countries impact the future of tobacco and nicotine research overall?

SUMMARY

There were four categories of responses:

1. Yes, there will be Future Impact
2. No, there will be no Future Impact or Future Impact is unclear
3. Future Impact for LMICs
4. Future Impact for SRNT

The majority of responses showed an expectation that there will be a shift and that the Tobacco Industry's shift to e-cigarettes in High-Income Countries (HICs) will impact the overall future of nicotine and tobacco research in different ways. Some respondents did not see a clear shift and believe that research should continue as is. There were some

responses directed specifically at the impact this shift in HICs can have on research and research funding in LMICs. The impact on SRNT was framed by the divisiveness in the research community related to funding from and research conducted by the Tobacco Industry.

SYNOPSIS WITH COMMENTS

Yes: Future Impact

Many agreed there will be a shift by the Tobacco Industry to e-cigarettes and other emerging tobacco (non-combustible) products, potentially causing shifts in research focus. Highlighted is the concern about keeping up with the pace of new products coming into the marketplace. A continuing theme is the concern around the divisiveness in the research community resulting from funding from the Tobacco Industry, especially with the advent of the SFWF.

Comments

- There will continue to be emerging tobacco products. Assuming that emerging products will prove to be less harmful than combustibles, the need for research in the service of public health may shrink
- Expect that this trend will create further tension and disruption within the research community regarding the probity of participating in such research. I do not see this trend slowing, so dealing with it will be increasingly important, but I also do not see an easy path forward for individual researchers let alone the Society
- Will be critical for researchers to understand how and why industry takes the action it does, how it attempts to influence the regulatory environment to maximize profits.
- Remains to be seen (though seems to be the direction). Large cohort studies need to be developed to track the health impacts of multiple patterns of tobacco use; need to be proactive about designing these studies.
- We will see a shift to studying e-cigarettes rather than combustibles.
- Research on electronic inhalation products will get higher priority.
- Divides research dollars across several areas of investigation and to some extent forces researchers to reinvent the wheel. Conversely creates opportunities for efficiencies to be established in RCTs and other clinical research.
- Will force the research community to conduct research on these products to understand overall impact on nicotine dependence.
- The scientific community will be tempted and enticed by substantial funding to provide information on the safety and efficacy of e-cigarettes.
- Will impact the struggle to measure e-cigarette use so research findings can be coalesced among studies to form interpretations.
- Big impact; focus of the research will need to include e-cigarettes and may take focus off combustibles; research community needs to keep the focus on both.
- Likely to continue to divide the research community particularly those working in the field of tobacco products regulatory science.

- Research will need to evaluate the impact of this changing environment. The science will need to keep up. As the ENDS market makes more money, the strength of industry influence on policy and possibly on investigators is concerning.

No Impact or Unclear

It's not clear what the impact might be, or whether there will be a shift of any significance. Most responding in this category had the opinion that a shift should not affect tobacco and nicotine research overall.

Comments

- Shouldn't affect tobacco and nicotine research; should be testing e-cigarettes and other alternative nicotine products scientifically and be led by the evidence.
- Research goals remain the same: public health, policy, prevention, and cessation therapies. Yet field will need to adapt quickly to the methodological challenges presented.
- The research continues as it does. New products only influence the type of research questions.
- It has changed the kinds of questions that are important, particularly the specific toxicity of these products.
- The question assumes this will happen; many in the TC field are quite skeptical of any real shift away from combustibles (based on profit margins).
- Unclear to what extent the industry will shift from cigarettes to other products.

Future Impact for LMICs

A main concern in these responses was the potential for a change in research focus in HICs to impact LMIC focus on nicotine and tobacco research related to control efforts for combustibles.

Comments

- Will have no impact on research that LMICs will continue to need for a long time.
- LMICs are not safe and will follow suit in a few years. HIC bear an ethical mandate to address harms and safety of products to help advocates and governments in other countries better control products.
- Could create damaging division between HICs and LMICs.
- It may take attention and resources away from needed tobacco control efforts in LMICs.

Future impact for SRNT

Those commenting in this category emphasized the desire for SRNT and its members to remain independent from the Tobacco Industry regardless of research focus.

Comments

- SRNT should strive to be independent of industry in regard to its promotion of research and policy.
- Do not see an easy path forward for individual researchers let alone the Society.

- Resist accepting tobacco industry funding to ensure unbiased results.
- Divide in the research community is likely to extend into the membership of SRNT, especially that it allows industry participation in its conferences. Concern that research studies on non-combustible cigarettes funded by the SFWF are likely to find their way through to SRNT conferences.
- SRNT has a role in supporting excellence in science, integrity of the application of scientific method in research, treatment and policy.

Question 7: In your opinion, how will the one billion dollars given by Phillip Morris to establish the Smoke-Free World Foundation (SFWF) impact the field in general and SRNT in particular?

SUMMARY

Respondents provided their opinions in two major categories:

- Impact on the Field
- Impact on SRNT

Related to *Impact on The Field* (in general) the majority of responses indicated that the establishment of the SFWF would have a negative impact on the field. A few respondents felt that the SFWF could potentially be helpful to the field, or actually have little impact. The remaining said that there was not enough information about the SFWF to make a judgement.

Related to *Impact on SRNT*, the dominant theme was that SRNT must make clear its position on funding from the SFWF and the Tobacco Industry specifically to research presented at conferences and accepted by the Journal. The respondents noted that decision to include or exclude will be for the membership to address.

SYNOPSIS WITH COMMENTS

Impact on the Field

- Will have a negative impact
- Potentially helpful
- Little impact/Don't know enough

Will have a negative impact

Respondents in this category were aligned in their opinions that research funded by the SFWF will be tainted by its association with Phillip Morris, and that research will not be in the best interests of the public health.

Comments

- Big threat -- Any research funded by this Foundation cannot be regarded as independent and trustworthy research.
- Will allow PMI to have even greater influence in shaping research priorities and affecting dissemination and intervention efforts.

- SFWF funding could slow down the progress to ending the tobacco epidemic.
- Funding from PMI will be very divisive within the tobacco control community as it will be viewed as tobacco money. Skeptical about PMI's role.
- SFWF is a blatant financial teaser to entice researchers and clinicians to advocate for what is after all an addictive product.
- How will the public health and scientific community react towards the SFWF with a predictor they will attempt to influence regulatory and public health communities.
- From an LMIC perspective, there is a high probability that SFWF will infiltrate research and generate more publications that can make things harder for tobacco control advocates.
- Net negative impact because of PMI's distribution of unaccountable funding to LMICs which could water down the implementation of effective tobacco control policies.
- Research funded by the industry will be used to support specific objectives that are industry-friendly.
- These monies will shape the types of research questions and scope of studies conducted to advance a narrow area of inquiry; this poses serious problems for the field and SRNT.
- Not convinced that a PMI backed organization does not have an agenda that connects to the economic goals of PMI.

Potentially helpful

These few respondents saw some positive results for SFWF funding, primarily as a source for additional research funds.

Comments

- Might have a positive effect because it is a source for more research and is focused on reducing tobacco harm.
- Anticipate SFWF sponsoring of considerable research programs will generate abstracts and manuscripts being submitted to the annual meetings and the NTR journal. This could change NTR's open submission policy.
- Establishment of SFWF is likely to promote research in the field; it will be important for SRNT to collaborate with the Foundation.

Little impact or /Don't know enough

Responses in this category simply did not see any substantial impact or said they did not know enough about the SFWF to make a judgement.

Comments

- Remains to be seen; the hope is the impact will be minimal.
- Will have very little impact given the current environment. Funding for tobacco research has been robust with FDA's initiatives; little need for researchers to seek out these opportunities.
- SFWF has launched through a series of missteps that have created distrust in the research community and there will be little common ground. If SFWF

establishes a level of trust with the field there will be more of a challenge for many in the field to figure out how to interact with SFWF or accept funding.

- Don't know enough about spending requirements and aims of the Foundation to comment.
- Not clear; haven't heard much from SFWF.
- Not familiar with this effort or the impact this may have on the field.

Impact on SRNT

Responses are divided between a sentiment of 'proceed with caution' and 'don't acknowledge SFWF as a funding source or accept funding'. There were clear cautions about the potential division among researchers that could be caused by accepting SFWF funding, and opinion that SRNT should take a strong role ensuring that research accepted by Society (and Journal) is not biased.

Comments

Proceed with caution

- SRNT should open discussion how to deal with SFWF.
- If SFWF funding slows down ending the tobacco epidemic, how will this impact SRNT and its stand towards the SFWF?
- SRNT will need to continue to focus on providing independent, scientific based voice during the rise of SFWF.
- SRNT should invest more in awareness at the global level.
- An important role for SRNT would be to ensure that research done under the auspices of SFWF is not biased by the interference of PMI
- Would like to see SRNT help provide well-defined definitions that demarcate industry-sponsored and other research. We need to educate researchers and the public what organizations like SFWF are supported by the tobacco industry.
- SRNT needs to ensure that tobacco industry-funded research efforts do not dominate the conference portfolios nor its journal; broader feedback is needed from the membership.

Don't accept SFWF funding or funded research

- SRNT could play a role to get the same amount of funds from government as an alternative to conduct independent research.
- SFWF is going to create division among members of SRNT at least initially.
- SRNT needs to take a strong position against the SFWF; we should not accept funding from the tobacco industry.
- Accepting research funds from SFWF could cause division within the ranks of SRNT members; could lead to restrictions on access to meetings and right to present work funded by SFWF at SRNT meetings, etc.
- SRNT should consider the SFWF funding as tobacco industry funding; the journal should not accept papers that report research supported by the tobacco industry of any kind.
- SRNT and NTR should not collaborate with the SFWF in any way and should treat the research it funds as industry research.

General comments

- Reducing smoking can have a profound impact on public health but promoting nicotine addiction via alternative products is not harmless.
- One billion dollars in funding does not necessarily translate into new knowledge and population impact on smoking. It depends on how it is used and how much trust and credibility can be retained by researchers who choose to accept these funds.

**SRNT 2025: Phase I
Stakeholder Survey Report
Detailed Analysis: Questions 6-8**

SECTION 2: E-CIGARETTES AND THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY

Question 8: Do you consider the E-Cigarette Industry to be the same as the Tobacco Industry? Why or why not? Does the ownership of E-cigarette companies matter, i.e., owned by the Tobacco Industry or privately owned?

SUMMARY

About 60% of respondents agreed that the E-cigarette Industry is the same as the Tobacco Industry, with a few 'yes' respondents providing qualifiers. The same percentage also agreed that ownership matters, especially if owned by a tobacco company.

40% do not consider the industries as the same, again with a few 'no' respondents providing qualifiers.

While there was a split between respondents about the importance of ownership, (60% said it matters, 40% said ownership does not matter) all had the same conclusion that neither industry is concerned with the public's health. Additionally, respondents noted that both industries have similar goals of profit and promotion of their products in the marketplace using similar tactics, again without regard to public health.

SYNOPSIS WITH COMMENTS

Is the E-Cigarette Industry the same as the Tobacco Industry?

Yes. They are the same

Respondents in this category were of the opinion that there is not material difference between the Tobacco Industry and the E-cigarette Industry. They cited similar goals of profit and lack of concern for public health as the primary reasons. Some also noted that tobacco companies own many of the e-cigarette manufacturers.

Comments

- Yes, they are similar to the extent that the tobacco industry has ownership or stakeholder positions that steer the e-cigarette industry.
- I consider them far more alike than dissimilar.
- Yes because the products of both industries are addicting and both industries are profiting.
- Yes, they are the same.

- Yes in the sense that for-profit companies share a principal goal of making money; we should approach e-cigarette companies in the same way we approach other for profit companies.
- Yes, the e-cigarette industry is part of the tobacco industry; most of the companies are now owned by tobacco.
- Yes, they are the same; in the US established tobacco companies have a significant share of the e-cigarette market.
- The e-cigarette industry has taken up the character of tobacco industry at the same time that tobacco industry sees getting into e-cigarette as a way to 'normalize' its business.
- There is overlap; in most cases these companies have a tremendous amount of money and shared goals of increasing consumer use of products that are not risk-free.

Yes. But...

These respondents see e-cigarette companies as primarily the same, with differences being providing products that can be construed as 'less harmful' and/or more complex than products from the traditional Tobacco Industry.

Comments

- E-cigarette companies are not different than tobacco industry as they are making a profit from those who become addicted to their products. Though e-cigarette companies are providing a product that is less harmful than other tobacco products.
- Do consider them similar, but e-cigarette industry has more permutations of options for products and devices are more complex; this is confusing to consumers and even scientists making the e-cigarette industry less transparent.
- Tremendous overlap; some e-cigarette companies are clearly not the same as tobacco companies yet they often act in similar ways (youth sales, marketing).

No. They are not the same

Respondents in this category see a marked difference between the Tobacco Industry and the E-cigarette Industry, primarily noting e-cigarette products as 'less harmful' and with different commercial interest.

Comments

- No. Companies that sell a single product have a different commercial interest than those that sell multiple products.
- No; the current e-cigarette industry is much less sophisticated than the tobacco industry.
- No, because their product is much less harmful.
- No; the e-cigarette product is not as dangerous as the combustible cigarette nor do the e-cig companies have any incentive to support combustible cigarettes.
- No; they are not producing a product that will have the type of devastating impact that combustible tobacco cigarettes have held.

No. But...

These respondents agree there is a difference between the industries, but identify some overlap based on their for-profit goals and marketplace promotions.

Comments

- Don't believe they are the same but do believe the tobacco industry is driving regulation on e-cigarettes.
- The e-cigarette and 'cigarette' industry are not identical but are all 'for profit' entities who are not in the business or promoting public health
- Not exactly; there is some overlap as the e-cigarette industry uses similar marketing strategies.

Does ownership matter?

Yes. ownership matters

About 60% of respondents to this question of ownership had the opinion that ownership does matter from a standpoint of the credibility of research findings supported by these companies, regulation, similar commercial goals, and impact on public health.

Comments

- Yes, it matters (two responses with this short reply)
- Yes; if they are primarily owned by tobacco companies the full potential of e-cigarettes as harm reduction products may not be fully realized.
- Yes; research from e-cig companies owned by the tobacco industry cannot be trusted.
- Yes, these are profit driven organizations and their interests are nearly identical
- Yes ownership of e-cigarette companies matter as do the words and actions of each company.
- Yes; the tobacco companies benefit whether smokers quit combustible cigarettes or not.
- Yes but may be less important when the FDA takes more steps to regulate the product.
- Linked to there not being clear lines between e-cigarette companies and the general tobacco industry; do think ownership matters to many in tobacco control and public health.
- Yes; there is collusion of interests in any regulation or discussion raised pro or against e-cigarettes with focus fading away from combustibles as main source of income.
- Yes but depends more on the specific e-cig company.
- Yes makes a big difference because tobacco industry is not interested in a smoke free world.

No. ownership does not matter

40% of respondents said that ownership does not matter, as the negative impact on public health is the same regardless.

Comments

- Doesn't matter
- No, neither have public health as their primary interest so ownership doesn't matter.
- Nicotine is sourced from the tobacco plant hence industry is always involved; so-called 'private ownership' is a misnomer.
- Not the determining factor as to whether these companies are concerning to individuals focused on public health.
- There is no "E-Cigarette Industry" writ large; whether independent or wholly owned many e-cigarette companies have used the traditional marketing tactics of the tobacco industry; so there is lots of distrust regardless of ownership.
- Irrespective of ownership the e-cigarette industry has not proven to be focused on having people quit tobacco use but rather on switching users to their products.

General comments

- Too many variations on ownership. "least-worst" approach – don't attempt to differentiate and put the focus on sufficient and appropriate disclosure and support increased transparency with research methods.
- In my country e-cigarette companies are fully independent of the tobacco industry, so the issue is not a challenge. We view the local e-cigarette industry as being part of the tobacco control solution.

Question 9: How do you view e-cigarette grant money versus Tobacco Industry funding?

SUMMARY

More than half the respondents said that grant funding from e-cigarette companies and the Tobacco Industry were unequivocally as the same. Of these, many simply gave a short reply of "They are the same".

About 30% of those responding believe there is a difference between accepting E-cigarette Industry or company funding versus that from the Tobacco Industry, saying that funding from e-cigarette companies would be acceptable as long as there was transparency about the funding source. Most said they would not accept, or endorse acceptance, of funding from the Tobacco Industry.

There were some general comments citing the complexity of the issue, while noting that the industries are different (in their opinions).

View as the Same

Most respondents in this category simply replied “there is no difference” without much additional comment; however, underscored was a recurring theme of similar interests by both industries in research that supports their goals.

Comments

- Best approach is not to differentiate between the two.
- Should be treated similarly (both focused on profit not public health).
- All questionable when one is early in their career.
- Funding from any company that profits from addiction would raise some skepticism about the motives of the company.
- Don’t draw major distinctions between the two in terms of research bias and influence. Each source of funding will have messaging and dissemination preferences.
- View as one and the same.
- Would put in the same group.
- There is no difference.
- The grant money may not be the same but without resolving who owns or controls the data or designs the studies it feels the same.
- They are the same. (5 respondents provided this abbreviated response)
- Anyone using money from the industry for research has a conflict of interest.

Require Transparency/Conflict of Interest

Respondents in this category agreed that funding from e-cigarette companies should be viewed differently from funding provided through the Tobacco Industry. Several equated e-cigarette funding as similar to funding from pharmaceutical companies, noting that there needs to be transparency about sources of funding from e-cigarette companies for research purposes. Many said they would not accept Tobacco Industry funding at all.

Comments

- Conflicts of interest should be stated whenever monies come from industry.
- Non-biased gatekeepers should be assigned to assure that tobacco support of FDA research funding is not a conflict of interest.
- Conflict of interest in the tobacco industry providing funding; but don’t view the same problems with e-cigarette grant money from federal agencies.
- Money from tobacco companies would be viewed as very suspect, whereas funding from an e-cig company should be viewed in the same way as from any corporation other than tobacco.
- Disclosure of independently owned e-cigarette company funding is important; would not endorse acceptance of tobacco industry funding at all.
- We do not accept tobacco industry funding at all; if we were offered e-cig grant money we would want to ensure complete transparency on all discussions and would accept only if it was unrestricted research funding.

- Should not be viewed in the same light as tobacco industry funding unless e-cigarette company is owned by the tobacco industry; would consider e-cigarette grants to be in the same category as other industry grants such as from pharmaceuticals.
- Same unless an e-cig company is seeking FDA approval as a medical device/therapy; would equate with pharma money (which has its own ethical concerns).
- E-cigarette grant money provided by the NIH is not motivated by the same type of profit seeking that motivates the tobacco industry.

General Comments

- Important question is the company that is backing the funding vs. the specific product.
- Very complicated. In an ideal world e-cigarette grant money would be looked at differently from tobacco industry funding if the e-cigarette company is independent; but that is not what is happening.
- E-cigarette and tobacco industry are different; we should be more concerned about what the grant money is used for rather than where it comes from.
- I would never take tobacco or ENDS industry money.

Question 10: **Should SRNT consider e-cigarette manufacturers to be part of the Tobacco Industry, and therefore ineligible for membership in the Society, or should e-cigarette manufacturers be allowed to fully participate in society activities?**
Does it make a difference if the company is owned by a Tobacco Industry company versus not owned by one (i.e., JUUL)*?

**At the time the survey was conducted JUUL was not Tobacco Industry owned.*

SUMMARY

In response to the first question of whether SRNT should consider e-cigarette manufacturers to be part of the Tobacco Industry (TI) and thus ineligible for membership and/or participation, a majority of respondents agreed that e-cigarette manufacturers are a part of the TI and should not be accepted for membership regardless of ownership.

Specific to the question of ownership, about 40% of respondents said that ownership does matter. If an e-cigarette company is owned by a TI, it should neither be eligible for membership or participation in SRNT activities. If the e-cigarette company is not owned by a TI, it should be allowed to participate in SRNT activities but still not eligible for membership. Some cited the similarity to acceptance of pharmaceutical company participation with SRNT.

SYNOPSIS WITH COMMENTS

Yes part of TI: membership should not be allowed no matter ownership

Respondents in this category agreed that e-cigarette manufacturers should be considered as part of the Tobacco Industry and thus ineligible for membership in SRNT.

Comments

- E-cig-manufacturers should be considered part of the tobacco industry; ownership does not matter. (3)
- E-cigarette manufacturers should be treated similarly to tobacco manufacturers
- Based on current evidence of e-cigarettes no nicotine product manufacturers should have membership, and yes they are part of tobacco industry
- SRNT should consider e-cigarette manufacturers to be part of the tobacco industry and NOT eligible for Society membership. Ownership does not make a difference.
- E-cigarette companies should be banned from SRNT membership unless/until they prove what they do is in best interests of the public.
- Ineligible for membership at this time.
- All e-cig manufacturers who sell consumer products with nicotine are part of the industry unless only marketing medical-therapeutic devices (like pharma)
- These entities are all part of the broad tobacco industry and should be treated as such.
- SRNT should consider e-cigarette companies like other tobacco companies.
- E-cigarette companies should not be allowed to fully participate in society activities.
- For purpose of SRNT membership and related activities, Think they should be grouped together; do not feel ownership of the company has bearing on this questions.
- Have the same standards across all nicotine products; companies with a vested interest in the outcomes of our research should be treated differently.
- E-cigarettes ARE part of the tobacco industry and should be banned.

Ownership matters: Should be allowed if independently owned; should not be allowed if owned by the TI

60% of respondents in this category agreed that ownership does matter, and those e-cigarette manufacturers not owned by the TI should be allowed to participate in SRNT activities. There was consensus that membership should not be offered regardless of ownership.

Comments

- There is a distinction between companies independent of TI; they (JUUL) are selling clean nicotine (and clean delivery devices) so are part of the solution and should be fully eligible (like pharma)

- Don't consider them part of the industry and SRNT should allow e-cig companies to fully participate in SRNT activities. If owned by a tobacco industry should be viewed as a tobacco company.
- Non-TI companies should still be invited to participate in some conference activities similar to previous years.
- E-cigarette companies should not be excluded from SRNT membership unless they are owned by tobacco companies that sell combustibles.
- E-cigarette manufacturers owned by TI should be banned from membership at this time.
- SRNT should not allow any TI involvement, it does make a difference whether it is TI owned or not. Non-TI e-cigarette producers should be considered in the same way other industries are (e.g., Pharma) by SRNT.
- Yes there is a difference. All researchers who work with TI or e-cig companies owned by TI should not be allowed to present their work at our conferences. (3 respondents)

General Comments

- Very difficult question. It should make a difference whether the company is independent, but not sure the majority of SRNT membership would agree with that. SRNT should go through a very careful exercise of weighing all issues.
- The policy we have in place to show that we do not have a research bias should apply for all members of industry (e-cig as well as pharma)
- The absence of TI ownership is not foolproof.
- Encourage the Society to reconsider its position of making employees of certain companies ineligible for membership.

**SRNT 2025: Phase I
Stakeholder Survey Report
Detailed Analysis: Questions 11-15**

SECTION 3: MEMBERSHIP AND STAKEHOLDERS

Question 11: Historically, SRNT has acted as an open scientific society that accepts research based on peer review. In your opinion, should SRNT remain an open scientific society where all researchers are welcome regardless of place of employment or source of funding, or should SRNT make a shift and become a more closed scientific society with an explicit bias against the Tobacco Industry? Is there a middle ground? Explain your answer.

SUMMARY

The majority of respondents had consensus that the Society should remain open to all researchers, and research must be subject to qualified peer review, with the caveat of transparency, and that those from the TI should not be members.

There was not a middle ground identified, though a few addressed it.

A small percentage (20%) had the opinion that membership and involvement should be 'black and white' with no participation by the TI.

SYNOPSIS WITH COMMENTS

Open Society fostering exchange of ideas

Respondents in this category agreed that SRNT should be an open society that allows research funded by the TI to be presented and discussed, with the caveat that funding sources for such research be clearly identified. It is also important that all research be held to the same standards during peer review and acceptance. Most agreed that excluding researchers who accept some funding from the TI will be a disservice to the research field. There was also agreement that TI professionals should not be allowed membership.

Comments

- An open exchange of ideas is important for any group that calls themselves a scientific society. Should be based on the quality of the science independent of the source; conflicts of interest clearly stated.
- Continue to follow its (mostly) open posture. Going further in a direction that restricts the number and range of viewpoints in play is very much counter to the long-term goals of the Society.
- Industry professionals cannot be members; we have to be prepared to lose members who are experts in our field if we exclude all those who receive industry

funding (including pharma). Need to make this decision consistently across all nicotine-producing/selling entities.

- Should continue to accept articles; methodology and results from industry studies can be valuable to our members.
- Remain open; accept all researchers to publish/present at SRNT meetings. Important to view all the science available and have it go through appropriate peer review. Allow for presentation/communication of the science, but not membership.
- SRNT should remain open to all investigators regardless of funding as isolating those with industry funding would eliminate many important investigators. Sufficient to deny membership to the tobacco industry.
- Traditional position of allowing industry to attend and submit abstracts for presentation should continue. The membership question for those who work for or are funded by e-cigarette companies is a more difficult issue.
- SRNT should remain open where all researchers are welcome regardless of place of employment or source of funding; there needs to be clear identification of sources of funding of the research and a disclaimer by SRNT that the research is funded by the industry.
- Follow history.
- Remain open but the peer review process should be used to maintain high quality; and clearly identify research coming from or funded by the industry.
- Think SRNT is already navigating the middle ground. TI research is always clearly identified and TI staff cannot present in open fora. Keep the status quo.
- More open scientific society is optimal. However, SRNT should declare its values and code of scientific conduct. Exclude tobacco industry membership but excluding all of these scientists (with funding from TI) from participation in our society would be an extreme overreaction.
- Remain an open scientific society; it will be good to understand what the tobacco industry is doing and their arguments. (2)
- Continue to accept abstracts that are accepted through peer review as long as all affiliations are clearly declared; voting membership limited to individuals not affiliated with tobacco or ENDS industries.

Middle Ground

Respondents in this category did not actually identify a middle ground but underscored the importance of SRNT maintaining strong standards for peer review and acceptance of research.

Comments

- Could be middle ground but unsure what it would be. Hard to accept that tobacco industry research is impartial; but allowing them to attend our meetings allows us to take a look at the work they are doing.
- Peer-reviewed research should continue to be the standard with exhaustive disclosures from all members of ANY funding received from the tobacco industry.

- Can't identify a middle ground; however, SRNT should be careful to ensure that the availability of funding by the industry does not result in biased scientific outcomes in content promoted by SRNT.
- Independent review of the raw study data (toxicological, biochemistry, quit rates, etc.) by independent SRNT members in those fields.

Closed Research Society – No Tobacco Industry

Respondents in this category were clear in their opinion that SRNT should adopt an explicit position that would not allow membership or any level of participation in SRNT by the Tobacco (and possibly E-cigarette) Industry.

Comments

- Best interests of science and the public to have as black and white a distinction between the society and the industry as possible.
- Warrants discussion; lean towards adopting an explicit position of not accepting scientific work supported by the tobacco and e-cigarette industry.
- I favor an explicit bias against the tobacco industry and affiliated institutions.
- Having tobacco industry-affiliated people at the SRNT meetings has a negative influence on the discussions that can be had.
- SRNT should follow other scientific societies that reject any tobacco company supported work. Don't view this as 'closed' by accepting the reality that the science done by industry is not objective work but rather public relations masquerading as science.

General Comments

- I will no longer attend SRNT USA meetings due to its bias towards the tobacco industry.
- Leave this up to other members who have interfaced more with the TI.
- Advise SRNT to establish some portion of its conferences as closed to industry participation and allow researchers to actively indicate where to place their work.

Question 12: **To bridge the gap between researchers and users of research, should SRNT expand its reach and focus beyond research only to provide membership services to groups in related fields? Does that gap need to be bridged by SRNT? Why or why not?**

SUMMARY

Respondents were split on this question, with 50% clearly responding 'no', noting that other organizations are available to take on that role. Of the others, 40% responded 'maybe', saying that SRNT has an opportunity to enhance its role in bridging the gap through collaboration with other organizations, but should not expand membership to do so. The remaining 10% or so thought this issue warrants some discussion about SRNT expanding its reach and role.

No need to expand reach; others can do that

There was clear consensus in this category that SRNT retain its current focus on research, noting there are other broader societies that can or already do provide services to related fields. Some also observed limited resources as a barrier to expanding reach or focus beyond what SRNT provides to its current membership base.

Comments

- Not in the best interest of science to have SRNT diversify.
- Would discourage the sort of extension to researchers in other related fields and focus the Society's energies on facing/addressing the major challenges around the tobacco industry.
- There are broader societies that can do this type of work.
- If we do, think of what the mission of SRNT should be – focused on research or research and translation; I think we should be focused on research.
- Leaning towards 'no'; have difficulty thinking about what type of membership services would be provided to non-researchers.
- No, don't explore providing membership services. Current focus on research, convening, and informing policy makers on the state of the existing science is a unique and special role
- Many societies cater to various interests and activities; it's important for SRNT to retain its focus on science and research as far as membership is concerned.
- SRNT focus should remain research; but there could be ways to interact with other fields/societies that have common interests.
- I like the strong, core focus on research and science.
- SRNT does not have the capacity to reach beyond its base of researchers; there are other organizations that are more practitioner and/or consumer focused organizations.

Maybe --bridge the gap but don't expand membership

Respondents in this category saw value in SRNT considering an enhanced role in education and outreach to related fields, but questioned SRNT's capacity to do so. There was also consensus that SRNT should not (necessarily) expand its field of membership but could consider collaboration with like societies as a way to bridge the gap.

Comments

- Not sure, SRNT can only do so much. Maybe can serve as a bridge to groups in related fields
- SRNT should do more to inform the public and stakeholders about evidence-based knowledge.
- SRNT should try to fill the gap between researchers and practitioners; it's an opportunity to establish a stronger voice on issues of importance to the broader community.

- Does seem worthwhile to have some outreach devoted to clinicians and to disseminate research findings to front line clinicians.
- SRNT needs to expand its reach and focus beyond research only but the gap should be bridged by someone else.
- SRNT could extend its role to include assisting researchers in communicating and disseminating their research to research-end users.
- We need to bridge more with researchers in the alcohol, other addiction, and medical societies and engage with guideline panels for consensus statements to be more clinically relevant.
- Yes, we should bridge the gap; the goal should be providing benefits to the world and how to make research and research findings more accessible, visible, and acceptable by the general public.
- Like the idea of SRNT educating the public. Not sure if this requires us to open our membership to non-researchers.
- Would like to see SRNT bridge out to cannabis; cannabis researchers don't have a reputable research society (yet).

Yes, consider expanding the membership

Respondents in this category agreed on the benefit of expanding membership to include non-related fields.

Comments

- Warrants discussion; how can the Society reach out to stakeholders who implement/use the science of our members.
- Yes and yes. This type of collaboration could be a win-win for both groups (researchers and research consumers)
- Perhaps divide into clinical, public health, basic neurobiology 'Chapters'.
- Yes extend SRNT research focus to yield data from all sources.
- Yes, expand our reach.
- Would like to see SRNT increase or improve efforts to communicate our research to our field and related fields; and the inclusion of scientists from other fields into our organization.

General Comments

- Don't see it as part of SRNT's mandate to provide services to users; however, it might be an interesting revenue generation route to explore.
- It depends on the definition of related fields: treatment, policy and other fields are represented presently; what did you have in mind?
- Four respondents: "don't understand the question".

Question 13: **Given the fact that 85 percent of SRNT members live/work in the U.S. or Canada, and its limited financial and people resources, how best can SRNT fulfill its mission to stimulate the generation and dissemination of new knowledge concerning nicotine in Europe, Oceania, the Middle East, Latin America, Asia, and Africa?**

SUMMARY

Respondents had thoughtful and interesting ideas in response to this question. There were three main themes emerging from responses:

- Increase financial and resource support
- Facilitate global networks and/or access to researchers
- Expand the number of and support for Chapters

SYNOPSIS WITH COMMENTS

Increase and diversify financial, other resource support

Ideas ranged from increased scholarship support for Conference attendance to making the Conference more widely available through technology (not depending on in-person attendance as the sole means of participation). SRNT's capacity to invest funds will be an issue.

Comments

- Make the conference more widely available; restricting access to in-person attendees is misguided.
- Travel awards, international meetings, web-based content (SRNT is doing a great job currently).
- Offer more gratis or significantly reduced membership(dues) to individuals from other areas of the world. Multi-tiered membership system could be pursued.
- Invest in researchers in these countries.
- Meeting sessions could be filmed and made available to overseas members; webinars.
- Collaboration with WHO Tobacco Free Initiative; Expand reach of Annual Meetings through live webinars of keynote, clinical theme lectures, seminars and pre-conference workshops; Create a donation fund for SRNT members for more international travel scholarships for young investigators from these regions.
- Need some investment to test the market responses to expanding.
- Have an annual meeting in Australia or New Zealand; might take a financial hit but that has to be okay.
- Travel fellowships to meetings and assistance to authors in other countries for writing papers of sufficient quality to warrant publication.
- Small dollar investment in running research capacity-building seminars or workshops with facilitators from within its membership base.

Facilitate global networks and/or access to researchers in other countries

Responses indicated the desire to increase global participation through networking and access to information and training. SRNT University was cited as a way to increase outreach, as well as more deliberate efforts to advance the participation of international researchers on panels and other Conference sessions.

Comments

- Facilitate research partnerships between those in N. American and other countries.
- Support researchers from such countries and focus on next generations of researchers.
- Achieving this with SRNT University. Broadening training depends on how much money SRNT has. Maybe consider broadcasting the meetings through web or developing podcasts.
- Having panels at the annual meetings that include researchers from these regions.
- Affiliating with similar organizations and researchers in other areas.
- In the Middle East have established a nucleus for a network of tobacco control advocates and practitioners; Lack the technological tools to continuously engage that network. SRNT could tap into such networks through collaboration and technology to expand its reach and change the perception of a mostly North American network.
- SRNT should remain a global organization and work to sensitize members and others to the important differences between the two developed countries (US and Canada) and the rest of the world and LMICs.
- Put together a concerted effort to 'recruit' top investigators from these global regions to become active in SRNT. NTR proactively reach out to investigators beyond the US and Europe. International travel scholarships as an avenue to support investigator participation. Recent efforts with the Global Health network and SRNT-U will help.

Expand Support for Chapters

Supporting the establishment of global Chapters is viewed as a potentially successful strategy to increase outreach to and involvement by non-North American countries in SRNT.

Comments

- Continue with a separate European chapter; explore opportunities to work with Global Bridges which focused on the Middle East, Latin America, Asia and Africa.
- Continue establishing chapters. Peer review process at NTR can work to be less US-centric; webinars and the trainee and education network could sponsor more events for investigators outside of the USA.
- Establishment of chapters which eventually become financially self-sustaining in each region will help grow SRNT and dissemination of research globally.

- Establishment of global Networks and Chapters should be encouraged. Even now SRNT journal, webinars and SRNT-U reach out to researchers around the globe; need to grow and support a cadre of local champions around the globe.
- Founding and modest support to regional chapters is very consistent with this goal. Primary limiting factor in such development is the availability of research resources in those regions.

General Comments

- SRNT can play an important role to inform the public about what is known about tobacco products. Idea is to support a Nicopedia-type page where scientists could add information for public consumption.
- This will remain an issue with research funding and training opportunities focused primarily in HICs.
- Most countries have signed the FCTC; SRNT USA should be leading in this.

Question 14: **There is a growing concern that SRNT tends to be U.S.-centric, resulting in a perception of SRNT as increasingly irrelevant to our international members. How can SRNT build its relevance to enhance our viability as an international society?**

SUMMARY

Respondents provided thoughts in two primary areas:

- Increase the visibility of international research at SRNT conferences and other activities
- Increase SRNT's visibility on the international stage

Responses primarily indicated a desire for SRNT to be more relevant on the international stage and provided ideas and recommendations for building SRNT's viability as an international society. There were several references to increasing the involvement of international researchers in the Society through participation in conferences and in SRNT governance. Use of technology to develop networks to facilitate exchange of information and ideas was also cited.

SYNOPSIS WITH COMMENTS

Increasing the visibility of international research at SRNT activities/conferences

There was consensus that SRNT can build its relevance internationally by deliberately increasing the inclusion of international research and researchers in Conference sessions and through the Journal. Additional ideas included greater involvement of researchers from other countries in SRNT governance and activities.

Comments

- CPDD has poster sessions that are devoted to international research; maybe this? Travel awards for some international researchers can be secured through NIH or other sources.

- Much of the research conducted worldwide is funded by the U.S. government which prioritizes issues relevant to the U.S.; SRNT might help improve the visibility of research relevant to other countries which may also increase membership.
- Explicitly including international context in webinars, meetings, web-based content, etc.
- Give these areas of the world more visibility at the annual conference and expand membership. Web-streaming services so members outside the US can virtually attend and interact with US-based membership more freely.
- Cost to attend the annual meetings is a barrier for those outside HICs, so more scholarships. Conference Chairs could identify plenary sessions that include non-U.S. perspectives. Have at least one presentation in each concurrent session that contributes a non-US perspective.
- Conference programming around activities outside of the US; include travel awards and other benefits for non-US members.
- Place a higher emphasis on quality non-US-based research for inclusion in the Journal and conferences.
- Establishment of regional chapters that can become financially self-sustaining. Greater involvement of researchers from other countries in SRNT governance and activities (i.e., speakers at conferences)
- Expand scope for visibility and participation for non-US members at annual meetings and other activities.
- Have another category of theme lecture for international or transnational research at the annual meeting. Have a standing theme lecture to highlight the top international researchers in the field and attract more international researchers.

Increase SRNT's presence on the international stage

Respondents underscore the opportunity for SRNT to have a greater presence internationally through involvement at global meetings and collaboration with international societies. This could also include dissemination of more research from other regions and use of social network platforms to connect researchers across the globe.

Comments

- Increase visibility by having a session at the WHO meeting.
- Have an International Network devoted to understanding the global tobacco problem.
- SRNT support and disseminate more research from other regions.
- Hold meetings outside the US and increase funding opportunities outside the US
- Joint meetings with SRNT Europe; meetings in other countries. Involve non-US members more heavily in all aspects of the Society.
- More overseas conferences, workshops, collaboration with overseas institutions/universities.
- Use social network platforms.

- Meeting in other continents. Incentives for non-US researchers to join (first year free; discounts to attend SRNT meetings; sponsorships).

General Comments

- Given that 85% of members come from US and Canada, seems strange not to focus on US efforts.
- Move SRNT to a U.S. chapter.
- FDA-funded regulatory science produces work that informs FDA, but is not necessarily needed by or relevant to other countries.
- Lean harder on current non-North American members to encourage and enable to promote SRNT.

Question 15: If SRNT did not exist, what problems or needs would spur the nicotine/tobacco field of research to establish an “SRNT”? What would be the value and purpose?

SUMMARY

This question did not resonate for many of the respondents, and most answered within the context of what already exists under the SRNT banner.

With that said, many cited problems or needs that would spur creation of an “SRNT” as lack of opportunities for collaboration with other scientists, the dissemination and communication of scientific findings, and the rising use of tobacco and tobacco products that impact the public health.

In terms of purpose and value, the following were cited as most important: dedicated network of scientists, collaboration among peers, a trusted forum for sharing and disseminating research findings, and a deliberate focus on the science and research outcomes.

SYNOPSIS WITH COMMENTS

Problem/Need

There were fewer responses about the problems or needs that would spur development of an “SRNT”, but of those provided lack of collaborative opportunities and the rising use of tobacco and tobacco products were among the top mentions.

Comments

- Creep towards orthodoxy in the field that would require the creation of an organization tasked with expanding viewpoint diversity in the field.
- Need to improve the quality and fidelity of dissemination and communication of scientific findings
- Lack of opportunities to publish and communicate important tobacco and nicotine dependence research.
- Fewer opportunities for researchers to collaborate and share ideas.

- Rise and use of e-cigarettes would lead to an SRTN being established.
- Rising incidence and prevalence of tobacco use and its products
- Need: a clinical research field to balance the dominance of addiction science in alcohol and other drugs.
- Need for network and colleagues
- Need: a demand of united nicotine/tobacco researchers
- Currently a dearth of robust, trustworthy research underpinned by rigorous science to inform clinical practice and policy:
- There would be several SRNT factions; original emerged when researchers were aligned against the tobacco industry; this helped shape focus and mission.

Purpose/Value

Many comments noted the important role of promoting collaboration and networking among peer scientists. Additionally, supporting the dissemination of unbiased research on nicotine and tobacco as well as providing a forum for exchange of information are critical attributes for a membership association.

Comments

- Promote non-biased research in an area of import to advance knowledge and public health
- Community and network of scientists dedicated to nicotine/tobacco
- Dedicated outlet for scientific findings
- Centralization and cohesion in a sea of research and research literature
- Fills the niche: single minded devotion to nicotine and tobacco science and its program and policy implications
- Facilitate research about nicotine/tobacco products so consumers are aware of the harms and benefits.
- Value would be mainly conferences and other networking; trusted scientific institution with a voice towards the public and stakeholders.
- Provide a place to share new data that cuts across different disciplines and methods. Network, develop new collaborations, expose trainees/junior faculty to other scientists and job opportunities.
- Collaboration and efficiencies built by disseminating information among a group of highly educated and motivated professionals.
- Hosting an annual scientific meeting
- Value would be enhanced by expanding beyond solely a research organization; having a more active/public role in addressing tobacco control issues.
- Educate membership on current issues; provide a forum for scholarly discussion; help train and educate future and current tobacco scientists
- Forum for researchers in all relevant fields to collaborate, communicate, engage in career development, assist in the translation and application of tobacco and nicotine research.
- Trusted independent scientific organization with purpose to put a light on loss of life, health and wealth due to tobacco and nicotine.

- Collaboration and communication across researchers to produce the highest quality research. A new SRNT would naturally form for this reason alone.
- Interaction among and exposure to the varied aspects of nicotine and tobacco research.
- Develop, conduct and share tobacco-related research evidence to reduce the toll of the epidemic.
- The public health importance of the questions that SRNT members address.
- Purpose would benefit scientific rigor and expertise into the production of new knowledge and translating that knowledge into practice and policy

General Comments

- SRNT is doing a great job now of keeping everyone in the tent, ensuring various perspectives are heard, and allowing an open space for scientific dialogue.
- In Australia: Far more relevant than a 'world leader' in tobacco control is a viable and active local group of clinicians and researchers who webinar, discuss and meet.
- In Eastern Mediterranean SRNT practically does not exist. Worked through simple methods to create a network and engage members in research. So in the absence of SRNT created an alternative. There needs to be more focus on regions outside North America.
- With respect, this is a dumb question.
- Glad this alternate universe does not exist; grateful to have SRNT.
- Some of these questions tend to indicate an established agenda or perspective; would be careful in how you word your questions in future.