

# Following the Science in the Age of Institutional Corruption

Antonio Chaves

## ABSTRACT

**Problem:** The COVID-19 countermeasures laid bare the extent to which special interests undermine the scientific process. It also pitted those who blindly trust governmental institutions against those who habitually question prevailing narratives. The first group facilitates corruption by making federal agencies less accountable to the public. On the other side of the coin, those who distrust the government create opportunities for charlatans who take advantage of their sense of institutional distrust. The goal of this lesson plan is to provide students with a rough guide for discerning whether or not the “science” is based on systematic or narrative-driven data-gathering. Most importantly, it gives students a “checklist” for objectively evaluating what they consume from both mainstream and alternative sources of news.

## BACKGROUND

### I. Widespread Scientific Fraud:

Lancet editor Richard Horton declared, “Much of the scientific literature, perhaps half, may simply be untrue. Afflicted by studies with small sample sizes, tiny effects, invalid exploratory analyses, and flagrant conflicts of interest... science has taken a turn towards darkness.” <https://www.drugawareness.org/editor-of-lancet-medical-research-is-unreliable-at-best-or-completely-fraudulent/>

### II. Captured Institutions:



Some jobs in the CDC are funded exclusively through the CDC Foundation. <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/102/hr3635/text>

### \$50,000 and above

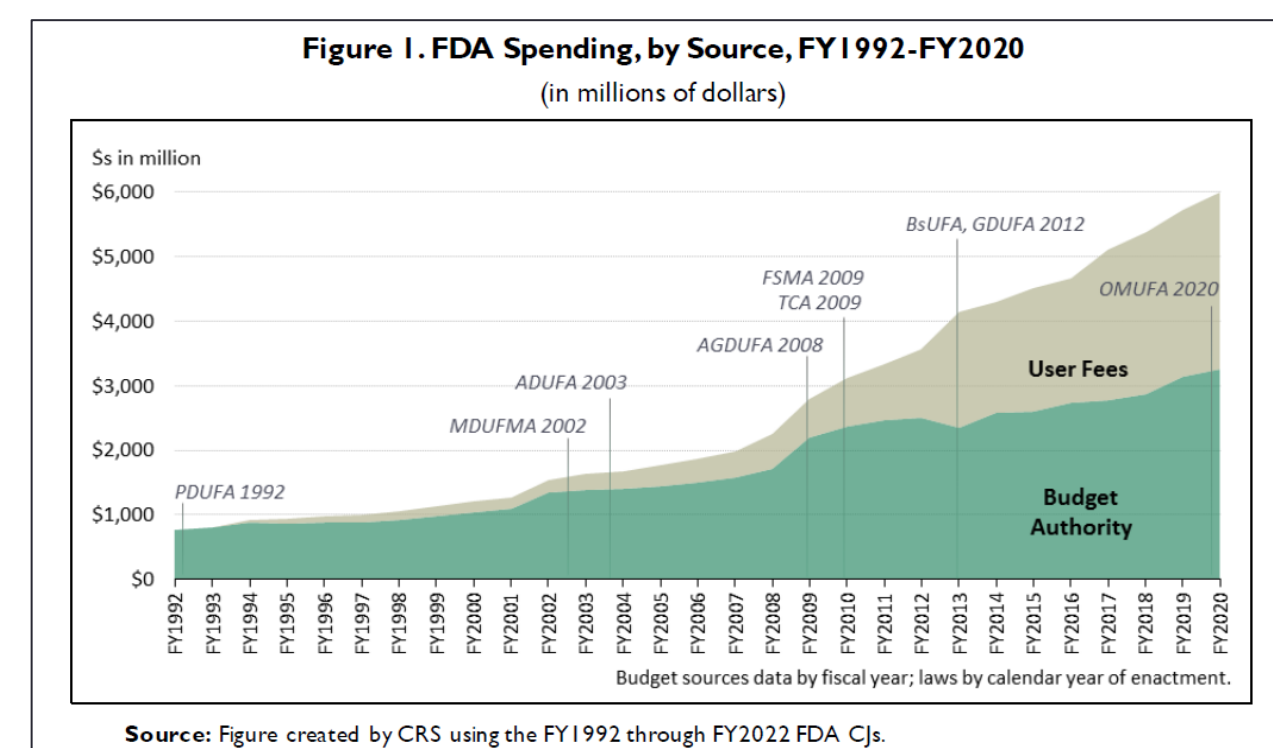
ActBlue Charities	Alabama Department of Public Health
America's Charities	American Online Giving Foundation
American Type Culture Collection	Amgen Inc.
Anonymous (4)	Anthem Blue Cross
Anthem Foundation	Arizona Department of Health Services
Avram Corporation	Benevity
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	Bloomberg Philanthropies

Most of the top funders of the CDC Foundation are in biotech and health care industries. <https://www.cdcfoundation.org/FY2021/donors?group=corp>

Hat Tip: The Covid Blog <https://thecovidblog.com/2021/03/23/cdc-foundation-is-not-a-government-entity-has-many-conflicts-of-interest/>

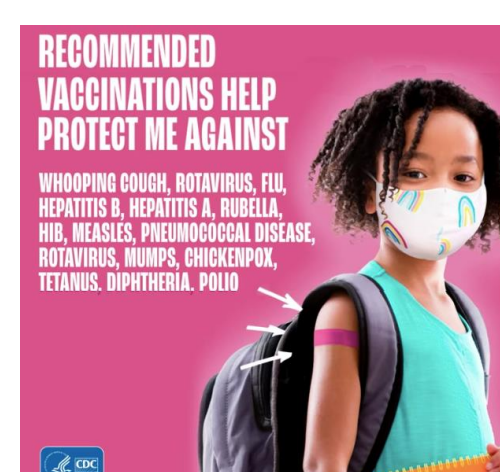
User fees from drug makers now cover nearly half of the FDA operating budget. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R44576/13>

Some agents now complain that the FDA often prioritizes profitability over safety. <https://www.projectveritas.com/news/fda-executive-officer-on-hidden-camera-reveals-future-covid-policy-biden/>

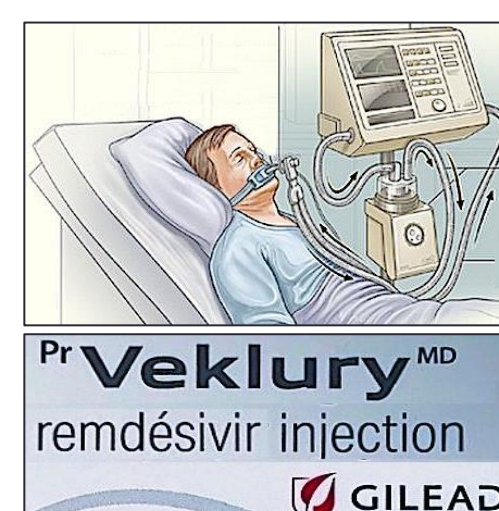


### III. Problematic Legislation:

The **Bayh-Dole Act** of 1980 allows federal agencies to collect royalties. <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2023/03/21/hhs-doc-announce-plan-review-march-in-authority.html>. This is why Moderna and NIH co-own the patent for all mRNA vaccines.



The **National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act** of 1986 provides liability protection to manufacturers of all products listed on the childhood immunization schedule. <https://digitalcommons.law.uw.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3792&context=wlr>.



The **Prep Act** of 2020 provides liability protection to health workers and manufacturers from all procedures and products that Homeland Security designates as “pandemic countermeasures.” <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/03/17/2020-05484/declaration-under-the-public-readiness-and-emergency-preparedness-act-for-medical-countermeasures>

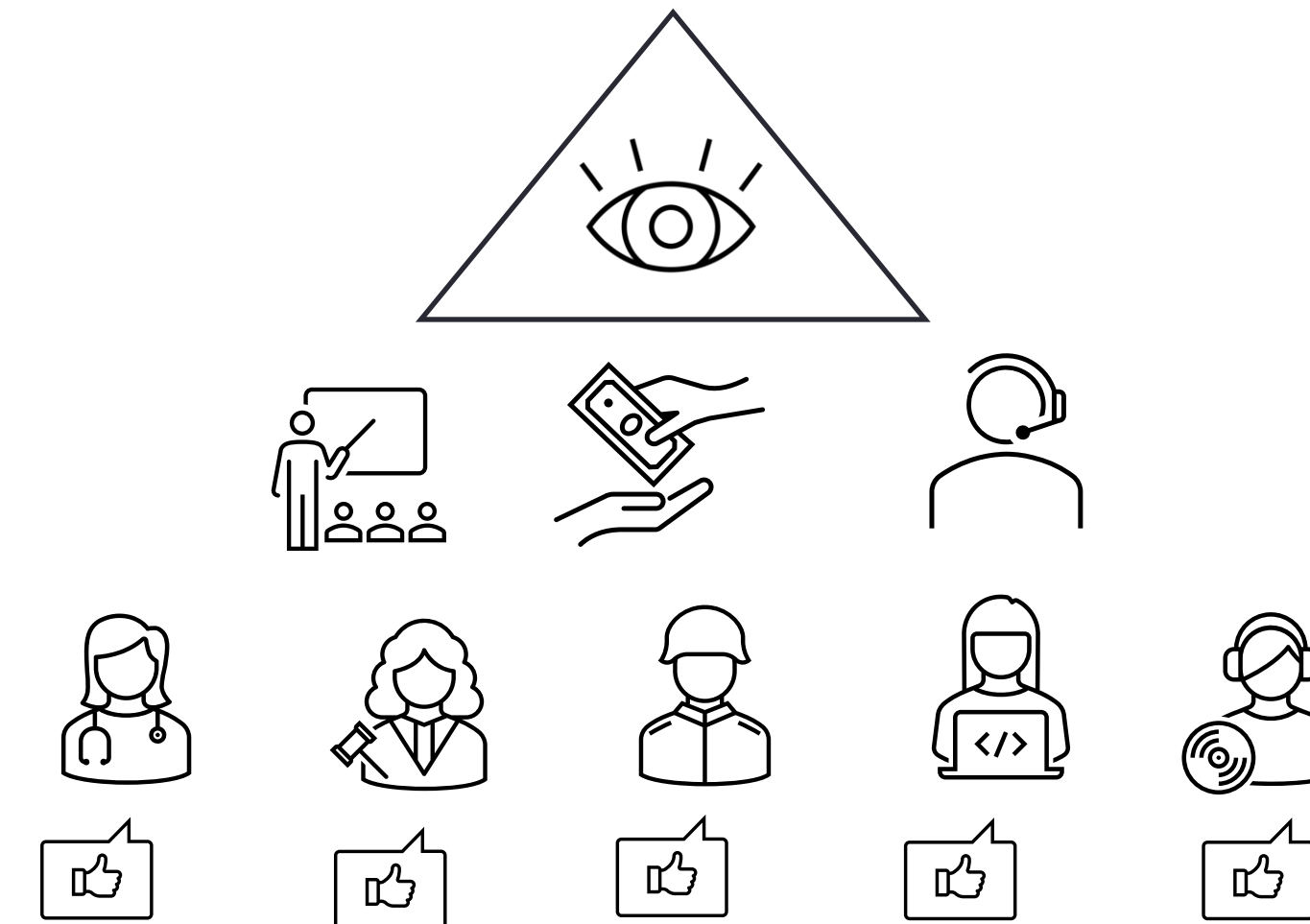
## SAMPLE LESSON PLANS

### What is astroturfing?

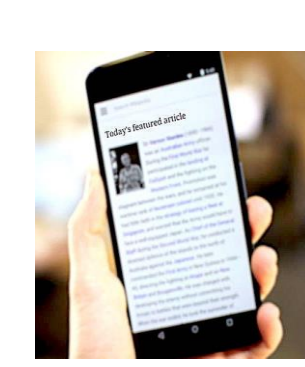


A top-down movement designed to create the false impression of widespread grassroots support for or against a given agenda. <https://sharylattkisson.com/2016/07/top-10-astroturfers/>

### Astroturfing Flowchart



**A Hypothetical Example:** You research a drug, not knowing that...



- online searches were rigged
- doctors were nudged
- “trusted sources” were captured



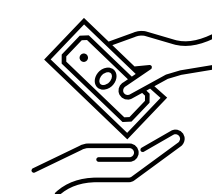
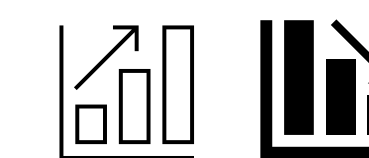
### A Real-Life Example:

The same key words generated completely different results on Google and Yandex due to rigged algorithms.

Why is Google hiding these wrongful death lawsuits?

### Red Flags for Discerning Scientific Fraud

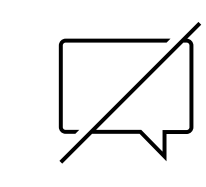
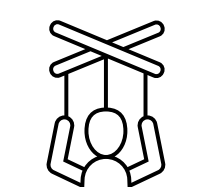
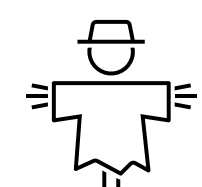
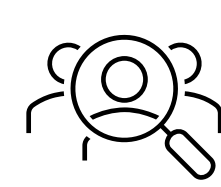
Does the data fail to concur with data from other sources?



Do any of the authors have a conflict of interest?

When confronted with contrary evidence, do the authors and their supporters engage in evasive behavior such as:

ad hominem attacks, straw man arguments, gaslighting, or censorship?



### Relevant Movies

**Soylent Green:** Science fiction thriller depicting the moral hazards of the public-private partnership.



**Contagion:** Disaster propaganda thriller produced in order to build trust in government institutions while undermining confidence in alternative sources of news and healthcare.



## SAMPLE ASSESSMENT

Which two of the aforementioned red flags are evident in this example of scientific fraud?

In May 2020, *The Lancet* published the results of a global dataset analysis showing that COVID-19 patients treated with hydroxychloroquine died at a higher rate than patients not receiving this drug. This publication was retracted when readers started reporting glaring inconsistencies with national registries of hospitalized COVID-19 patients and the third party providing the data suddenly became unavailable. At the time of publication one of two lead co-authors was conducting trials with the far more profitable COVID treatment, Remdesivir.

**Disclaimer:** The antiviral properties of HCQ are still being debated.



[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(20\)31324-6/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)31324-6/fulltext)



Which type of evasive behavior is described in this personal account?

A patient with chronic shortness of breath and chest discomfort sees a cardiologist. Without examining her, the cardiologist attributes her symptoms to “anxiety” and “panic disorder.”



<https://twitter.com/React19org/status/1553092518790647808>

Which type of evasive behavior is demonstrated in this FDA tweet?

Background information: Ivermectin is a broad-range antiparasitic drug on the WHO’s list of “essential medicines.” In affluent nations where parasitic infections are relatively rare, this drug is more likely to be used on animals. Some doctors prescribe ivermectin “off label” in order to treat COVID-19 even though its antiviral properties are still being debated.



<https://twitter.com/j/web/status/1429050070243192839>

Which type of evasive behavior is demonstrated in this tweet?

**Ian Copeland, PhD @IanCopeland5** · Feb 26  
Side note: Why do people listen to @MattWalshBlog about...well anything?  
He's a highschool graduate talking about biology, sex, policy and vaccines. He literally yields no value on any of these topics.

<https://twitter.com/IanCopeland5/status/1630008321708118019>

For links and further details:  
[www.entropyrider.com](http://www.entropyrider.com)