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To the editor:

We read with interest the recent article¹ in the *New York Times* reporting on undisclosed financial ties in a *Nature Neuroscience* review article on treatments for mood disorders². According to the *Times* article, *Nature's* policy permitted the author of the review to remain silent about his patent and other significant financial interests in treatments praised in his review.

In February 2002, the Center for Science in the Public Interest and two dozen prominent scientists wrote a letter urging the *Nature* journals to strengthen their policies and procedures regarding conflicts of interest. A lengthy story³ about the issues raised in that letter was published in the March 28, 2002 issue of *Nature*.

Among other things, that article pointed out that *Nature's* policy was weaker than a number of its peer publications. You will be interested to know that despite the fact that it was cited as having one of the strongest policies, *The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* has taken additional steps to improve its policy⁴, by explicitly expanding the disclosure requirement to "all authors, members, referees, and editors"—be they authors of letters, review articles, or editorials. Particularly in light of the *New York Times* article, the undersigned urge you to revisit our recommendations and establish a more robust policy that requires (i) mandatory disclosure of conflicts of interest for all authors, referees, and editors, (ii) mandatory disclosure of all information regarding the specific contributions of authors, (iii) publication of those disclosures, and (iv) rejection of submissions where authors' conflicts are incompatible with integrity in science. Such a policy is a necessary safeguard against potential bias and would ensure that your readers have sufficient information to evaluate the studies, commentary, reviews, letters, and other statements made in the pages of the *Nature* journals.

- Petersen, M. "Undisclosed Financial Ties Prompt Repeal of Doctor" *New York Times*, August 3, 2003.
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Editor's Footnote:

Drs. Nemeroff and Owens are correct in stating that Nature Neuroscience's policy for review articles (in contrast to primary research) did not require them to make a financial disclosure and that we did not ask them to do so. We are now changing our policy, for reasons that are discussed in the editorial on page 997.

