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## Letters

# Readers' Response to "So What Is a Sham Peer Review?"

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To the Editor,

Through an advocacy capacity, I assist those who have been made ill from environmental exposures. The concerns raised by Dr. Chalifoux<sup>[1]</sup> and other physicians in regard to improper medical peer review practices are valid concerns. The problem is pervasive. Several, who adhere to their oaths, have been harassed and persecuted for speaking out on the subject.

Sham peer review has caused a situation in which many people who have been made ill from exposures and injuries within occupational settings are not able to receive workers' compensation or treatment from their physicians.<sup>[2]</sup> Understanding how and why this is happening is an easy trail to follow. The simplest way to explain the situation is through an extended metaphor: To follow the trail, one simply needs to follow the Guide that blazed it -- Money.<sup>[3]</sup> It is a well-marked, loop trail that begins high up in the inner circle of medical associations that write treatment protocols for injured workers.<sup>[4]</sup> Money traverses its way down through the twisted path of sham peer-reviewed medical journals.<sup>[5]</sup> It then crosses the bridge into teaching hospitals and creeps along the shady, well-planned route of administrative incentives for insurance denials.<sup>[6,7]</sup> It trods heavily into the ravine of litigation, attempting to stomp on those who dare to challenge its direction.<sup>[8]</sup> Money then shimmies its way back up the cliffs to the trailhead of the protocol-writing medical associations.

For those honorable physicians who refuse to follow the intimidated pack -- as the pack follows the Money -- it can be an isolated and treacherous trail.<sup>[9,10]</sup>

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