

# **Bribery: Doctors gifted \$100,000 a year to use hip replacement products**

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Orthopedic surgeons in the US have been receiving bribes of \$100,000 and more every year to use special hip and knee replacement products on their patients.

Five manufacturers at the centre of the bribery ring have been fined \$311m (£150m) by the US Department of Justice.

The companies admit paying “many” orthopaedic surgeons “consulting fees” that ranged from \$10,000 to hundreds of thousands of dollars every year.

Of the five companies, four have been handed the fines; the fifth, Stryker Orthopedics, cooperated with the US’s attorney office and was not punished.

The four were Zimmer, which was fined \$170m, DePuy Orthopedics, fined \$85m, Smith & Nephew, fined \$29m, and Biomet, fined \$27m.

Investigators discovered the pay-outs were common practice between 2002 and 2006. As well as receiving “consulting fees”, the surgeons were also treated to lavish trips and expensive gifts.

(Source: British Medical Journal, 2007; 335: 1065).