

In response to news that Philip Morris International has announced its contentious £1 billion takeover of the respiratory drugs company Vectura, FIRS says:

We are deeply concerned that Philip Morris International (PMI) is now set to profit from the medicines used to treat the illnesses that its products cause. This takeover is not ethical, or in the best public interest nor in the interest of lung disease patients.

Tobacco is one of the biggest preventable causes of many lung diseases globally. Despite repeatedly insisting that its long-term strategy has been to move away from tobacco-based products, PMI continues to manufacture more than 2bn cigarettes per day and markets cigarettes in low- and middle-income countries where young people's smoking has increased in recent decades.

We are concerned that PMI will use the technologies developed by Vectura to make their tobacco products more addictive.

We have additional concerns that future research for the firm could be affected, with universities having rules that block them from taking funding from tobacco businesses and their subsidiaries. This takeover is a blow to the scientists at Vectura who have dedicated their careers to improving the lives of people living with debilitating lung disease, and to all of those advocating for tobacco control.