

Research on the Influence of Tourism Performing Arts Media Exposure on Tourists' On-Site Travel Intention: A Case Study of the Chongqing Drone Light Show

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Abstract: Tourism performing arts is an important sector in the integration of culture and tourism. However, existing studies mostly focus on on-site tourist experiences and pay insufficient attention to the antecedent psychological mechanism by which potential tourists develop on-site travel intention through media exposure. Taking the Chongqing Drone Light Show as a case, this paper, based on the SOR framework, divides tourism performing arts media exposure into three dimensions: exposure frequency, exposure content, and interactive participation. It introduces telepresence as a mediating variable and constructs a “media exposure–telepresence–on-site travel intention” model. A questionnaire survey obtained 350 valid samples, and empirical tests were conducted using reliability and validity tests, correlation analysis, regression analysis, and Bootstrap mediation effect tests. The results show that all three dimensions of media exposure significantly and positively affect on-site travel intention, with the intensity order being interactive participation, exposure frequency, and exposure content. All three dimensions significantly and positively affect telepresence. Telepresence significantly and positively affects on-site travel intention and plays a significant mediating role between each dimension of media exposure and on-site travel intention.

Keywords: Tourism performing arts; Media exposure; Telepresence; On-site travel intention; Chongqing Drone Light Show

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1. Introduction

Tourism performing arts is an important sector in the integration of culture and tourism. At the national level, successive arrangements have been made: the recommendations for the 15th Five-Year Plan propose advancing the deep integration of culture and tourism and vigorously developing the cultural tourism industry; in January 2025, the General Office of the State Council issued a document requiring the cultivation of new growth points in cultural tourism consumption and the launch of immersive cultural tourism products, new performing arts spaces, and digital exhibition spaces; in 2026, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism's 15th

Five-Year Plan for culture and tourism further emphasized cultivating high-quality tourism performing arts and promoting the integration of offline performances and online streaming. Driven by policies, the market continues to expand. In 2025, large and medium-sized tourism performing arts performances nationwide reached 198,700 shows, with box office revenue of RMB 17.442 billion and 87.9897 million audience members. “Traveling to a city for a single performance” has become a new phenomenon in cultural tourism consumption.

Existing studies mostly focus on on-site tourists’ experience quality and subsequent behavioral intentions, paying insufficient attention to the antecedent process by which potential tourists form on-site travel intention through media exposure; there is also a lack of empirical testing of the psychological mechanism through which media exposure affects travel intention. The Chongqing Drone Light Show provides a suitable case. Since its first show in April 2025, it has held more than 90 shows, with over 11 million on-site spectators and approximately 11 billion online views. In the past year, it drove cultural tourism consumption in Nan’an District to RMB 41.955 billion, a year-on-year increase of 9.63%. Whether and how online traffic translates into on-site travel intention is a psychological mechanism worth studying.

This paper takes the Chongqing Drone Light Show as a case, adopts the SOR framework, sets tourism performing arts media exposure as the stimulus variable, telepresence as the organism variable, and on-site travel intention as the response variable, and constructs a “media exposure–telepresence–on-site travel intention” model. It empirically tests the impact of media exposure on on-site travel intention and the mediating role of telepresence, aiming to provide a reference for optimizing media communication strategies for tourism performing arts.

2. Literature review and research model

2.1. Tourism performing arts

Tourism performing arts, also called tourism performances or tourism shows, mainly refers to artistic performances aimed at non-local audiences ^[1]. Its roles include bringing tourist flows to destinations, extending tourists’ stay time, and promoting consumption; displaying local culture with modern technology ^[2]; spreading regional culture and enhancing local cultural visibility while providing audiovisual shock ^[3], thereby attracting more tourists. Existing studies differ in research objects, relationships with culture, and theoretical support: foreign studies mostly use authenticity theory as a framework, while domestic studies relatively lack systematic theoretical construction ^[4]. Overall, studies mostly focus on on-site tourists’ experience perception and subsequent behavior, paying less attention to the antecedent communication process in which potential tourists contact tourism performing arts information through media and form on-site travel intention; the dimensional division of media exposure and its psychological influence mechanism also lack systematic empirical testing.

2.2. SOR model

The SOR model was first proposed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974) and originates from environmental psychology. The model holds that external stimuli first act on individuals’ internal psychological states and then drive behavioral responses, emphasizing the mediating role of the organism ^[5]. The application of this framework in tourism has gradually expanded from SR to SOR, and it is often used to explain how destination stimuli affect tourist loyalty through internal factors ^[6]. The organism in tourism SOR is further refined into three stages: cognitive evaluation, affective feeling, and affective experience, involving six elements: image, value, emotion, flow, involvement, and satisfaction; the rationality of this structure has been verified ^[7]. Overall, in the context of tourism performing arts, whether and how media exposure affects potential tourists’ on-site travel

intention through psychological mechanisms such as telepresence still lacks systematic empirical testing.

2.3. Media exposure and on-site travel intention

Levy and Windahl (1984), from the perspective of audience activity theory, divided media exposure into “qualitative orientation” and “time sequence,” providing a classic basis for the dimensional division of media exposure^[8]. Live streaming has greater information richness in terms of temporal characteristics, communication channels, interactivity, and personalized information supply, and information richness can positively affect tourism consumers’ on-site travel intention^[9]. Hu Li and Gong Jian, using SOR as a framework and short videos as the stimulus variable, verified the driving effect of short videos on tourists’ travel intention^[10]. Combining the above studies, this paper divides tourism performing arts media exposure into three categories: exposure frequency, i.e., the number and duration of audiences’ exposure to information related to the Chongqing Drone Light Show, reflecting media exposure intensity; exposure content, i.e., the types and characteristics of information audiences are exposed to, including performance footage, urban cultural narratives, and tourist experience sharing; and interactive participation, i.e., audiences’ liking, commenting, forwarding, and secondary creation during exposure.

Media exposure is an important antecedent of travel intention formation. Studies have shown that exposure to both mass media and social media may significantly affect audiences’ destination visit intention; in the short-video context, the richer the comment information, the stronger the travel intention^[10]; informativeness and social interaction can promote travel intention^[11]. At the same time, the satisfaction of online virtual tourism needs among tourism short-video users is significantly associated with their offline on-site travel intention. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Tourism performing arts media exposure has a significant positive impact on on-site travel intention.

H1a: Exposure frequency has a significant positive impact on on-site travel intention.

H1b: Exposure content has a significant positive impact on on-site travel intention.

H1c: Interactive participation has a significant positive impact on on-site travel intention.

2.4. Mediating role of telepresence

Under the SOR theoretical framework, tourism performing arts media exposure is an external stimulus; its three dimensions—exposure frequency, exposure content, and interactive participation—jointly act on audiences’ telepresence experience through different mechanisms. High-frequency media exposure enables audiences to repeatedly conduct psychological simulation and imaginative processing of performance scenes, continuously strengthening spatial telepresence of “being there”^[9]; high-quality media content—such as stunning performance footage, urban cultural narratives, and tourist experience sharing—stimulates audiences’ spatial telepresence and social telepresence through information quality and visual vividness^[12]; and deep interactive participation enhances audiences’ psychological co-presence with on-site spectators through social involvement^[13–14]. The wide dissemination of the Chongqing Drone Light Show on platforms such as Douyin and Xiaohongshu, rich content supply, and audiences’ enthusiastic discussions in comment sections and active participation in secondary creation transform audiences from passive receivers into active content co-creators, effectively promoting the formation of telepresence. Accordingly, this study proposes:

H2: Tourism performing arts media exposure has a significant positive impact on telepresence.

H2a: Exposure frequency has a significant positive impact on telepresence.

H2b: Exposure content has a significant positive impact on telepresence.

H2c: Interactive participation has a significant positive impact on telepresence.

Telepresence is an individual's subjective experience of "being there" in a media environment and is also an important concept in virtual experience research. Spatial telepresence and social telepresence can predict destination support and travel intention among tourism short-video viewers^[14]; communication content, communication scenes, and communication subjects have positive impacts on travel intention, with social telepresence playing a partial mediating role; social telepresence and spatial telepresence mediate the process by which celebrity credibility and expertise affect viewers' travel intention. In addition, telepresence strengthens sensory realism, which in turn affects visit intention^[15]. The Chongqing Drone Light Show is large in scale and visually striking; after dissemination through short videos and live streaming, it easily enables audiences to form spatial and social telepresence and feel "as if they were there." Accordingly, this study proposes:

H3: Telepresence has a significant positive impact on on-site travel intention.

Therefore, tourism performing arts media exposure may both directly affect on-site travel intention and indirectly work through telepresence. For the Chongqing Drone Light Show, through media exposure, audiences form telepresence regarding the performance scenes and transform cognitive and affective responses triggered by media exposure into on-site travel intention. Accordingly, this study proposes:

H4: Telepresence mediates the relationship between tourism performing arts media exposure and on-site travel intention.

H4a: Telepresence mediates the relationship between exposure frequency and on-site travel intention.

H4b: Telepresence mediates the relationship between exposure content and on-site travel intention.

H4c: Telepresence mediates the relationship between interactive participation and on-site travel intention.

In summary, this study uses the S-O-R model as the logical framework, introduces media exposure, takes telepresence as a mediating variable, and constructs a model of the influence of tourism performing arts media exposure on tourists' on-site travel intention, as shown in **Figure 1**.

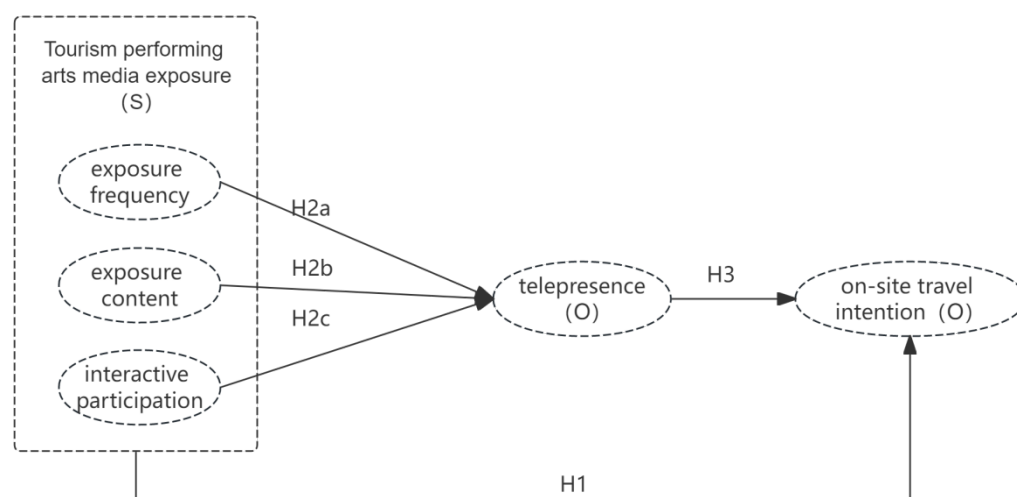


Figure 1. Model of the influence of tourism performing arts media exposure on tourists' on-site travel intention

3. Research design and questionnaire processing

3.1. Research design

This study takes the Chongqing Drone Light Show as a case. This show is a relatively representative regular tourism performing arts project in China, with wide media coverage and a large audience; related content is frequently updated and visually striking, and the linkage between online communication and offline viewing is obvious. In addition to official release channels, on-site tourists, travel bloggers, and local lifestyle accounts also participate in filming, commentary, and promotion, forming a multi-agent media communication ecology.

The survey was conducted through online questionnaires. To ensure that respondents had been exposed to media information about the Chongqing Drone Light Show and had a basic understanding of it, they were asked to watch relevant short videos or graphic-text content from no fewer than two platforms for no less than 2 minutes before filling out the questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: the first part collected basic tourist information, and the second part was the variable scale. All variables used a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 to 5 indicating “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Items were appropriately adjusted based on mature domestic and international scales in light of the actual situation, as shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Measurement scale

Latent variable	Code	Observed variable	Reference
Exposure frequency	A1	I frequently watch videos related to the Chongqing Drone Light Show through short-video platforms.	[8,9]
	A2	I am exposed to information related to the Chongqing Drone Light Show multiple times every week.	
	A3	I spend a relatively long time each time I watch videos related to the Chongqing Drone Light Show.	
	A4	I actively search for and continuously follow the latest updates of the Chongqing Drone Light Show.	
Tourism Performing Arts Media Exposure	B1	The drone light show information I am exposed to includes wonderful live performance footage.	[16]
	B2	The drone light show information I am exposed to presents Chongqing’s urban features and cultural characteristics.	
	B3	The drone light show information I am exposed to includes experience sharing and evaluations from other tourists.	
	B4	The drone light show information I am exposed to is rich and diverse, satisfying my curiosity.	
	B5	The drone light show information I am exposed to is creative and visually appealing.	
Interactive Participation	C1	I like videos or posts related to the Chongqing Drone Light Show.	[8,16]
	C2	I comment on or participate in discussions under content related to the Chongqing Drone Light Show.	
	C3	I forward or share content related to the Chongqing Drone Light Show with friends.	
	C4	I actively create or publish content related to the Chongqing Drone Light Show.	
Telepresence	D1	When watching related videos, I feel as if I am at the viewing site along the two rivers and four banks.	[14]
	D2	When watching related videos, I feel that the drone performance scenes are happening right before my eyes.	

Telepresence	D3	When watching related videos, I can feel the enthusiasm and lively atmosphere of the on-site audience.	[14]
	D4	When watching related videos, I have a sense of personally experiencing this performance.	
	E1	I am willing to travel to Chongqing in the future to watch the drone light show on site.	
On-site Travel Intention	E2	I plan to arrange a trip to Chongqing in the near future to watch the drone light show.	[17]
	E3	I will actively recommend to relatives and friends that they go to Chongqing to watch the drone light show.	

3.2. Questionnaire distribution

Data collection was conducted through a professional questionnaire survey website and officially launched in April 2026, lasting one month. A total of 364 questionnaires were distributed and returned online and offline; 14 invalid questionnaires were excluded, and 350 valid questionnaires were finally obtained. All respondents had viewed the Chongqing Drone Light Show online. Sample information is shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Descriptive distribution of sample characteristics

Variable	Indicator	Percentage (%)	Variable	Indicator	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	54.57%	Monthly Income	3,500 yuan and below	10.29%
	Female	45.43%		3,501-5,000 yuan	25.43%
	26-35 years old	38.86%		5,001-8,000 yuan	36.57%
Age	18-25 years old	32.00%		8,001-12,000 yuan	18.86%
	36-45 years old	19.43%		12,001 yuan and above	8.86%
	46-55 years old	8.29%	Viewing Channel	Douyin	76.4%
	Over 55 years old	1.43%		Kuaishou	32.1%
Education Level	High school or below	10.00%		Xiaohongshu	58.7%
	College/Associate degree	24.00%		Weibo	27.9%
	Bachelor's degree	48.29%		WeChat	49.3%
Residence	Master's degree or above	17.71%		Travel platforms	22.6%
	Southwest China	62.8%		News/information apps	18.4%
	Other	37.2%		Other	6.2%

3.3. Reliability analysis of the scale

This study conducted reliability and validity tests on the measurement variables using data from 350 valid questionnaires, and the test results are shown in **Table 3**. The results show that the Cronbach's α coefficients of all dimensions were greater than the critical standard of 0.7; the composite reliability (CR) values of all dimensions were all higher than 0.7, indicating good internal consistency of each dimension and acceptable overall questionnaire reliability. In terms of convergent validity, the standardized factor loadings of all items were greater than 0.5, indicating that the items could effectively correspond to their constructs. According to existing research, when $CR > 0.7$, an AVE slightly lower than 0.5 is acceptable in empirical research. The convergent validity of this scale basically meets the research requirements, and structural equation modeling analysis can be conducted.

Table 3. Confirmatory factor analysis and reliability analysis

Latent Variable	Item	Standardized Factor Loading	AVE	CR	Cronbach's α
Tourism Performing Arts Media Exposure	A1	0.82	0.65	0.88	0.88
	Exposure frequency	A2			
		A3			
		A4			
	Exposure Content	B1	0.53	0.81	0.81
		B2			
		B3			
		B4			
		B5			
	Interactive Participation	C1	0.53	0.82	0.82
		C2			
		C3			
		C4			
	Telepresence	D1	0.50	0.73	0.73
		D2			
		D3			
		D4			
	On-site Travel Intention	E1	0.51	0.75	0.75
		E2			
		E3			
		E4			

3.4. Validity analysis of the scale

This study used confirmatory factor analysis to test the discriminant validity and construct validity of the questionnaire. As shown in **Table 4**, the square root of AVE of each latent variable in this study was greater than the correlation coefficient between that latent variable and all other latent variables, indicating good discriminant validity among the latent variables, that the measurement items could effectively distinguish different core research variables, and that there was no serious collinearity problem. As shown in **Table 5**, the overall fit indices of the structural model and sample data were far smaller than the ideal threshold of 3; RMSEA was less than 0.08; CFI, IFI7, and TLI were all greater than 0.90; all fit indices met the ideal standards of social science research, indicating that the structural model was compatible with the sample data, the construct validity was excellent, and further structural path analysis and mediation effect testing could be conducted.

Table 4. Discriminant validity analysis

	Exposure frequency	Exposure Content	Interactive Participation	Telepresence	On-site Travel Intention
Exposure frequency	0.81				
Exposure Content	0.49***	0.68			
Interactive Participation	0.41***	0.33***	0.73		
Telepresence	0.62***	0.62***	0.63***	0.64	
On-site Travel Intention	0.69***	0.64***	0.71***	0.97***	0.66
Square Root of AVE	0.81	0.69	0.73	0.63	0.66

Note: *** represents $P < 0.001$, reaching a 1% significance level; the diagonal values are the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of the corresponding latent variables.

Table 5. Overall fit indices

	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	IFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Standard Value			1~3	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	<0.08
Structural Equation	216.44	179	1.210	0.987	0.984	0.987	0.024

Note: ** indicates a significant correlation at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

4. Verification of research hypotheses

4.1. Correlation analysis

The results of the correlation analysis are shown in **Table 6**. There were moderate positive correlations between exposure frequency, exposure content, interactive participation, and telepresence; there were moderate positive correlations between exposure frequency, exposure content, interactive participation, and on-site travel intention; there was a relatively strong positive correlation between telepresence and on-site travel intention. In addition, the three dimensions of tourism performing arts media exposure were also significantly positively correlated with one another. The above significant positive correlations among variables are fully consistent with the logic of the S-O-R theoretical model presented in this study; that is, media exposure dimensions, telepresence, and on-site travel intention are closely related, laying a solid foundation for the following path impact research and mediation effect testing among the main variables.

4.2. Main effect test

Multiple stepwise regression was used to test the main effects, and the results are shown in **Table 7**. The VIF values of all paths were less than 3, indicating that collinearity among variables was not strong. Meanwhile, exposure frequency significantly and positively affected on-site travel intention, exposure content significantly and positively affected on-site travel intention, and interactive participation significantly and positively affected on-site travel intention, so H1 is fully supported; exposure frequency significantly and positively affected telepresence, exposure content significantly and positively affected telepresence, and interactive participation significantly and positively affected telepresence, so H2 is fully supported; telepresence significantly and positively affected on-site travel intention, so H3 is supported. The above results verify the direct effects of the dimensions of tourism performing arts media exposure on on-site travel intention, as well as the positive effects of media exposure dimensions on telepresence and the positive effect of telepresence on on-site travel intention, laying a solid foundation for subsequent mediation effect testing.

Table 6. Correlation coefficient matrix of variables

Variable	Exposure frequency	Exposure Content	Interactive Participation	Telepresence	On-site Travel Intention
Exposure frequency	1				
Exposure Content	0.362**	1			
Interactive Participation	0.304**	0.224**	1		
Telepresence	0.434**	0.404**	0.412**	1	
On-site Travel Intention	0.493**	0.432**	0.496**	0.672**	1

Note: ** indicates a significant correlation at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

Table 7. Main effect test

Hypothesis	Path Relationship	Standardized Path Coefficient β	VIF	<i>P</i>	Result
H1	Exposure frequency→On-site Travel Intention	0.18	1.325	0.000***	Supported
	Exposure Content→On-site Travel Intention	0.14	1.261	0.000***	Supported
	Interactive Participation→On-site Travel Intention	0.23	1.235	0.001***	Supported
H2	Exposure frequency→Telepresence	0.26	1.225	0.000***	Supported
	Exposure Content→Telepresence	0.25	1.17	0.000***	Supported
	Interactive Participation→Telepresence	0.28	1.12	0.000***	Supported
H3	Telepresence→On-site Travel Intention	0.44	1.468	0.000***	Supported

Note: *** indicates $P < 0.001$, * indicates $P < 0.05$

4.3. Mediation effect test

The simple mediation model Model 4 in the SPSS macro program developed by Hayes was used, with the three dimensions of tourism performing arts media exposure as independent variables, on-site travel intention as the dependent variable, and 5,000 repeated samplings under a 95% confidence interval. Whether the mediating effect of telepresence was significant was judged according to whether the indirect effect's 95% confidence interval contained 0. The results are shown in **Table 8**. The 95% confidence intervals of the three indirect paths did not contain 0, and the indirect effect values were 0.12, 0.11, and 0.12, with standard errors of 0.0189, 0.0222, and 0.0208, respectively. It can be seen that telepresence plays a significant mediating role between the three dimensions of tourism performing arts media exposure and on-site travel intention, so H4 is supported.

Table 8. Mediation effect test results

Hypothesis	Path Relationship	Indirect Effec	S.E.	95% Confidence Interval		Test Result
				Lower	Upper	
H4	Exposure frequency→Telepresence→On-site Travel Intention	0.12	0.0189	0.08	0.16	Supported
	Exposure Content→Telepresence→On-site Travel Intention	0.11	0.0222	0.07	0.15	Supported
	Interactive Participation→Telepresence→On-site Travel Intention	0.12	0.0208	0.08	0.16	Supported

5. Conclusions and recommendations

5.1. Conclusions

5.1.1. Direct driving of media exposure and arousal of telepresence

The three dimensions of tourism performing arts media exposure all significantly and positively affect on-site travel intention, with the intensity order being interactive participation, exposure frequency, and exposure content. Active interactions such as liking, commenting, and forwarding are more likely to form affective involvement and directly translate into on-site visit desire. "Active participation" is more able to stimulate travel motivation than "passive reception." The three dimensions also significantly enhance telepresence, with interactive participation and exposure frequency having stronger effects and exposure content slightly weaker. Tourism performing arts communication should not merely pile up information but should construct

psychological immersion through high-frequency interaction.

5.1.2. Driving role and mediating transmission of telepresence

Telepresence has a prominent driving effect on on-site travel intention. As an organism response in the SOR framework, telepresence shortens the distance between online virtual experience and offline travel decision-making. When media such as short videos enable audiences to have immersive sensory and emotional experiences, their travel impulse is aroused and transformed into on-site travel intention; spatial telepresence and social telepresence work together to prompt audiences to actively recommend, plan itineraries, and give priority to Chongqing. Telepresence plays a mediating role between media exposure and on-site travel intention: media exposure triggers cognitive and affective responses through exposure frequency, exposure content, and interactive participation, forms telepresence, and transforms it into on-site travel intention.

5.2. Recommendations

The communication optimization of the Chongqing Drone Light Show can be advanced collaboratively from three aspects: interaction, immersion, and content. At the interaction level, topic discussions and challenges should be set around the show, platforms should be used to guide liking, commenting, and forwarding, and secondary creation should be incentivized through short-video collection and check-in comment selection, so that audiences change from information receivers to communication participants and form diffusion. At the experience level, first-person shooting, live sound, and VR/AR can be used to strengthen spatial telepresence, while materials such as audience cheers and interactive interviews can be added to create social telepresence, allowing online audiences to feel “being at the viewing site along the two rivers and four banks” and promoting the conversion of online traffic into offline consumption. At the content level, it is necessary to deeply explore the “two rivers and four banks,” mountain city night scenery, and Bayu cultural resources, improve information richness and visual appeal, and implement differentiated supply for different groups—highlighting visual spectacle and check-in attributes for young tourists, creating a highly recognizable and brand-strong cultural tourism IP, and meeting diverse information needs.

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Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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