



AABFJ Special Issue: Life Settlements and Viaticals

SPECIAL ISSUE OBJECTIVE

Knowledge transfer from academic research to industry practice has been stronger, historically, among the sciences than in the social sciences. Less than 10% of the articles that have been written in the area of life settlements and/or viaticals in the past twenty years were written by academics. Instead, the debate on issues affecting the use of these secondary market securities, their potential benefits and drawbacks to the population as a whole has been dominated by legal practitioners, and life insurance industry consultants both in writing and in the courts. Academics who ought to be contributing a more balanced perspective have stood to the side, focused instead on the minutiae of academic discourse. This special issue of the Journal of Australasian Accounting, Business and Finance is intended to redress this gap in the research by asking business academics to consider the relevance of life settlements/viaticals from their individual disciplinary perspectives.

TOPICS FOR THE SPECIAL ISSUE

There is no methodological limitation for articles to be considered. However, priority will be given to original research based upon empirical data that effects the development of knowledge in the life settlement/viatical arena.

Suggested areas with potential include but are not limited to:

1. Regulation and trade in life insurance around the world. For example, can approaches to selling or purchasing in force life policies that have developed in the United States be extended to other nations?
2. Financial planning. For example, how beneficial is it to potential retirees to rely on the sale of their life policies for future income: and what are the tax implications of such a sale, or what are the after effects of a settlement?
3. Ethics. For example, the debate on the pros and cons of trade in life policies can be extended to the marketing of life settlements and the counter claims of life insurance companies.
4. Risk management and financial modeling. For example, while there has been some interest in the pricing of settlements using options and duration models modified to take into consideration variations in human longevity, pricing could also consider the role of brokers and their commissions in determining long term value.
5. Economic History. While overviews of the development of this phenomenon have been published, there is room for further examination of comparable efforts to securitize alternative investments.
6. Management. For example, what governance regimes have been employed by life settlement providers and what issues arise as a result of current changes taking place in financial markets that are intended to control market actors.
7. Accounting. For example, how should the costs of insurance be calculated on individual policies that are to be settled: i.e. how can profits be attributed in the valuation of policies being settled?

Many more questions can be asked and as research is undertaken, the questions will expand. Academics from numerous disciplines could be profitably employed in such research as they have the capacity to make unbiased and considered contributions in an area that remains contentious both among market participants and government regulators.

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