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Increasing Transparency in Pharmaceutical Marketing Communications:

*the new code from the
European Federation of Pharmaceutical
Industries and Associations (EFPIA)*

by Joan Barnard, Rene Lai and Andrew Robson
Advisor: Paul Woods



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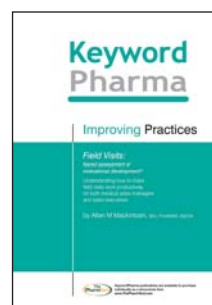
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Increasing Transparency in Pharmaceutical Marketing Communications: the new code from the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA)

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89 Oxford Road, Oxford OX2 9PD, UK

Tel: +44 (0) 1865 865943

Web: www.networkpharma.com email: support@networkpharma.com

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Executive summary

The representative body of the pharmaceutical industry in Europe, the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA), issued the latest revision to its code of practice in late 2007. The EFPIA code, introduced in 1992 and last revised in 2004, does not act as a pan-European code, but is implemented through the national codes of its member organisations. The updating of these national codes in line with the new EFPIA guidelines will be completed by the end of July 2008.

Prompted by a desire to answer growing criticism of the pharmaceutical industry with a robust and effective system of self-regulation, the new EFPIA code aims to foster an environment where the public can be confident that choices regarding the medicines they are prescribed are based on individual merits and healthcare needs. As such, the need for greater transparency in pharmaceutical marketing communications is the main take-home message from the new code, which comprises revisions and clarifications designed to tighten existing regulations.

Despite this, certain aspects of the code remain open to interpretation, while other areas allow for flexibility in implementation.

This Expert Review delivers a line-by-line summary of all revisions, both major and minor, to the EFPIA code, and offers insight into the likely implications for the pharmaceutical industry and its customers. It outlines the background and principles of the new code, looks at how it will work in practice and provides guidance on its implementation.

The Review also includes details of an entirely new, separate EFPIA code, designed to regulate industry relationships with patient organisations.

In both cases, the latest EFPIA guidelines underline an increased desire for clarity and transparency in how the industry interacts with its healthcare customers.

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About the authors



Dr Joan Barnard (www.joanbarnard.co.uk) is the author and publisher of 'The Code in Practice', a practical guide to the ABPI Code for Head Office staff, and 'The Code in the Field', a guide to the ABPI Code for Medical Representatives. Both books are now in their third editions and are used widely throughout the pharmaceutical industry.

Joan joined the pharmaceutical industry in 1980 and held various positions in clinical research and medical affairs, both in the UK and internationally, including 5 years as a UK Medical Director. She was a member of the ABPI Code of Practice Appeal Board for 4 years.

Joan set up her medical consultancy in 1994, specialising in the regulation of promotional activity, particularly in relation to the ABPI Code of Practice. She runs regular workshops on the code and provides guidance to a broad range of companies on interpretation and implementation of the code. She is registered with the PMCPA as a conciliator.

Joan can be contacted at: BarnardJo@aol.com



Rene Lai (www.renelai.co.uk) is a consultant providing professional services to the pharmaceutical industry, international consultancies and medical education agencies. Rene has been principally involved in working with companies to develop their own compliance processes and procedures; identifying and implementing electronic review processes; providing support and interpretation necessary for the review and approval of marketing materials and activities for UK and European teams, and giving training on the ABPI Code of Practice.

Rene is a pharmacist by training and has extensive experience within the pharmaceutical industry. She was Principal Pharmaceutical Adviser, involving a diverse role within Medical Affairs, for a major blue chip company. Rene worked for an international medical consultancy to develop and manage promotional and educational meetings in the USA, Europe and South East Asia, and so developed her knowledge of the regulations and code of practice issues involved with international meetings and activities. Rene set up her own consultancy in 2002. Rene is also involved in ABPI code training run by the PMCPA.

Rene can be contacted at rlai@renelai.co.uk



Andrew Robson is a consultant with extensive experience in the pharmaceutical industry. He provides consultancy services and training to companies, including training on the ABPI Code of Practice and reviewing code of practice procedures.

Andrew has worked with the ABPI code for many years. He participated in the ABPI Code of Practice Review Group that was responsible for the 2006 edition of the code.

Before establishing his consultancy in 2004, Andrew worked in the pharmaceutical industry, latterly as Director of Global Medical Information at GlaxoSmithKline. He is editor and co-author of the book 'Pharmaceutical and Medicines Information Management'.

Andrew can be contacted at andrew.robson@ntlworld.com

Advisor

Paul Woods is Global Compliance Policy and Assurance Director for AstraZeneca where he works on compliance policy and monitoring. He previously specialised in sales and marketing codes and regulations, formulating company policies and leading training and interpretation. He is AstraZeneca's Code Compliance Officer for the IFPMA Code Compliance Network and has been actively involved in revision of the IFPMA, EFPIA and ABPI codes of practice, as well as contributing regulatory input to EFPIA's information for patient activities. A pharmacist by training, he has recently completed a Masters degree in Medical Ethics and Law.

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