

# Keyword Pharma

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## Expert Reviews

### *Tightening Regulations and Raising Standards in UK Marketing Communications:*

*the new ABPI Code of Practice  
(2008) explained*

by Steven Gray



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An in-depth report from The International Publication Planning Association's 5th Annual Meeting held in San Francisco, CA, 25-26 June 2007.

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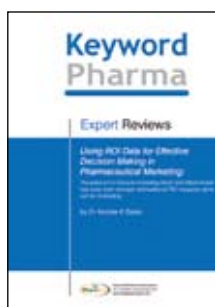
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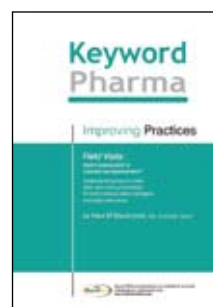
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# Tightening Regulations and Raising Standards in UK Marketing Communications:

*the new ABPI Code of Practice (2008) explained*

Steven Gray

## Executive summary

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In the 50th year of the Association of British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) Code of Practice, a new edition becomes effective on 1 July 2008. Whilst the revisions it contains are largely the direct requirements of the 2007 European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA) Code, the UK still manages to introduce some unique considerations.

Changes to the code reflect an overall objective to increase transparency in the interactions between pharma and its stakeholders. Significantly, there is a clear shift of emphasis towards regulating industry communications with a broader range of stakeholders – the code no longer simply governs promotion to healthcare professionals (HCPs), but also looks at interactions *with* them.

The 2008 revisions are designed to tighten controls and, in the process, further improve the standards of pharmaceutical marketing communications in the UK. Areas such as donations to institutions and how the industry, in particular its representatives, engages the services of HCPs have been scrutinised, and this has led to new clauses and additional controls.

The new code will bring new challenges in implementation for pharma companies throughout the UK. This Expert Review, *Tightening Regulations and Raising Standards in UK Marketing Communications*, provides a clause-by-clause summary of the major revisions to the ABPI Code of Practice, and how these may impact industry interactions with its stakeholders. It also reviews aspects of the code that may be open to interpretation, and offers advice where scope for flexibility still remains.

This review also includes a brief summary of revisions to the constitution of the Prescription Medicines Code of Practice Authority (PMCPA), which administers the code on behalf of the ABPI, and its procedures for managing complaints when breaches of the code have been alleged.

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## About the author

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Steven Gray is a specialist in healthcare sales and marketing compliance. With a strong background in sales, marketing and compliance, Steven aims to help companies implement the various industry compliance regulations in a manner that enhances their business, rather than limiting their objectives. In addition to delivering customised in-house training, Steven Gray Consulting Limited supplies a range of materials to support training managers and compliance officers run their own courses. In addition, the company provides template policies for key business areas including meetings, sponsorship and patient group interactions. More information

can be found on the company website: [www.stevengrayconsulting.co.uk](http://www.stevengrayconsulting.co.uk)

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### Strategies and Solutions for Publication Planning and Execution Excellence

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ISBN-13: 978-1-905676-17-0

An in-depth report from The International Publication Planning Association's 5th Annual Meeting held in San Francisco, CA, 25-26 June 2007.

#### Executive Summary

The reputation of the global pharmaceutical industry is currently suffering, and there is public mistrust of drug companies' publication practices. The industry can only eradicate this problem through increased transparency, honesty and openness in its publications. Clearly, the provision of unbiased information to medical decision makers is essential, not only for the sake of the industry's image, but, more importantly, for the good of public health.

In an environment of rapidly changing rules and regulations, pharmaceutical companies must develop their own robust publication policies that reflect the latest guidelines. Crucially, they must also develop compliance programmes to ensure that all those working on publications not only understand company policy, but actively implement it.

This Conference Insights review provides an in-depth review of the 5th Annual Meeting of The International Publication Planning Association held in San Francisco, CA, 25-26 June 2007. It details the major challenges facing publications professionals, including the need for disclosure, transparency and compliance. It offers guidance on how to develop and implement company policy, looks at the involvement of marketing in the publication process, the growth of open-access publishing and how agencies and drug companies can develop effective partnerships.

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#### About the author

Elizabeth (Liz) Wager is the author of books on '*Getting Research Published: An A to Z of Publication Strategy*' and '*How to Survive Peer Review*'. She is a co-author of '*Good Publication Practice For Pharmaceutical Companies*' and the European Medical Writers Association guidelines on the role of medical writers.

After obtaining a First Class zoology degree from Oxford University in 1983 she worked for Blackwell Scientific Publications, Janssen-Cilag then Glaxo-Wellcome. In 2001, she set up her own company, Sideview, which provides training, writing, editing and publication consultancy services.

She is a member of: the *BMJ*'s Ethics Committee, the World Association of Medical Editors Ethics Committee, the Council of the Committee on Publication Ethics, the editorial board of *European Science Editing* (the journal of the European Association of Science Editors) and the World Health Organization Scientific Advisory Group on trial registration.

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