

UCB and PharmaMar have breached the ABPI Code of Practice for the Pharmaceutical Industry and brought discredit upon, and reduced confidence in, the pharmaceutical industry.

UCB – Case AUTH/2972/8/17

For failing to review and re-certify materials on its corporate website, aimed at the public or patients, and for the apparently longstanding poor governance of that website, UCB was ruled in breach of the following clauses of the Code:

- Clause 2** - Bringing discredit upon, and reducing confidence in, the pharmaceutical industry
- Clause 7.2** - Providing inaccurate information
- Clause 9.1** - Failing to maintain high standards
- Clause 14.5** - Using material for more than two years without re-certification
- Clause 26.2** - Providing inaccurate information for the public

The full case report was published in the February Code of Practice Review which is available at www.pmcpa.org.uk.

PharmaMar – Case AUTH/2979/9/17

For promoting Yondelis (trabectedin) for an unlicensed indication, disguising the promotional nature of material, making a misleading comparison and an unsubstantiated claim and failing to certify promotional materials, PharmaMar was ruled in breach of the following clauses of the Code:

- Clause 2** - Bringing discredit upon, and reducing confidence in, the pharmaceutical industry
- Clause 3.2** - Promoting a medicine for an unlicensed indication
- Clause 7.2** - Making a misleading comparison
- Clause 7.4** - Making an unsubstantiated claim
- Clause 9.1** - Failing to maintain high standards
- Clause 12.1** - Disguising promotional material
- Clause 14.1** - Failing to certify promotional material

The Code of Practice Panel reported PharmaMar to the Code of Practice Appeal Board which subsequently publicly reprimanded the company for failing to make any meaningful effort to undertake a thorough investigation and to provide evidence to support its position. Such an approach raised grave concerns about the importance attached by PharmaMar to compliance and self-regulation. The Appeal Board also required PharmaMar to issue a corrective statement.

The interim case report, which includes the wording of the corrective statement, is available at www.pmcpa.org.uk. The public reprimand appears on the front cover of the February Code of Practice Review which is also available on the website.

The Prescription Medicines Code of Practice Authority (PMCPA) was established by The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) to operate the ABPI Code of Practice for the Pharmaceutical Industry independently of the ABPI. The PMCPA is a division of the ABPI. The Code covers the promotion of medicines for prescribing to health professionals and the provision of information to the public about prescription only medicines.

If you have any concerns about the activities of pharmaceutical companies in this regard, please contact the PMCPA at 7th Floor, Southside, 105 Victoria St, London, SW1E 6QT or email: complaints@pmcpa.org.uk.

The Code and other information, including details about ongoing cases, can be found on the PMCPA website: www.pmcpa.org.uk.