

The ABPI Code of Practice for the Pharmaceutical Industry sets standards for the promotion of medicines for prescribing to health professionals and the provision of information to the public about prescription only medicines. Publicity is the main sanction when breaches of the Code are ruled. The latest cases ruled in breach of Clause 2 of the Code (a sign of particular censure) are highlighted below.

Chiesi Limited, Eli Lilly and Company Limited and Bayer Healthcare have each breached the ABPI Code of Practice for the Pharmaceutical Industry and brought discredit upon, and/or reduced confidence in, the pharmaceutical industry. Bayer Schering Pharma has breached the Code and has been publicly reprimanded.

Bayer Schering Pharma – Case AUTH/2333/7/10

For being involved in the generation and distribution of a prescribing policy document on vardenafil (Levitra) that was described as being ‘Supported by an educational grant’, Bayer Schering Pharma was ruled in breach of the following clause of the Code:

- Clause 4.1** - Failing to include prescribing information.

The Code of Practice Panel reported the company to the Code of Practice Appeal Board. During its consideration of the matter, the Appeal Board learnt that the material was circulated more widely than previously indicated. For failing to provide comprehensive information to the Authority, Bayer was publicly reprimanded by the Appeal Board.

Chiesi – Case AUTH/2352/8/10

For providing a clinical support service that it knew GPs were being encouraged locally to use to effect a switch programme, Chiesi was ruled in breach of the following clauses of the Code:

- Clause 2** - Bringing discredit upon, and reducing confidence in, the pharmaceutical industry.
- Clause 9.1** - Failing to maintain high standards.
- Clause 18.4** - Failing to provide a genuine therapeutic review that included a comprehensive range of relevant treatment choices.

Eli Lilly – Case AUTH/2366/10/10

For providing inappropriate hospitality to two health professionals, Eli Lilly was ruled in breach of the following clauses of the Code:

- Clause 2** - Bringing discredit upon the pharmaceutical industry.
- Clause 9.1** - Failing to maintain high standards.
- Clause 15.2** - Representatives failing to maintain a high standard of ethical conduct.
- Clause 19.1** - Providing excessive hospitality.

Bayer Healthcare – Case AUTH/2383/2/11

For issuing an advertisement about Yasmin which underplayed the side effects of the medicine and which was misleading and inconsistent with the summary of product characteristics, Bayer Healthcare 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** - Encouraging prescribers to consider prescribing Yasmin for reasons other than its licensed indication.
- Clause 7.2** - Making misleading claims.
- Clause 7.9** - Underplaying the side-effects of Yasmin.

The full case reports were published in the PMCPA May Code of Practice Review and are also available at www.pmcpa.org.uk.

The Prescription Medicines Code of Practice Authority (PMCPA) administers The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry's (ABPI) Code of Practice for the Pharmaceutical Industry at arm's length from the Association itself. 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 Southside, 7th Floor, 105 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QT** or complaints@pmcpa.org.uk.

The Code and other information, including details about ongoing cases, can be found on the PMCPA website.