

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 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) and where companies were publicly reprimanded are highlighted below.

AstraZeneca and Allergan have breached the ABPI Code of Practice for the Pharmaceutical Industry and brought discredit upon, and reduced confidence in, the pharmaceutical industry. In addition, Allergan was publicly reprimanded.

AstraZeneca UK Limited – Case AUTH/3430/11/20

For promoting an unlicensed vaccine, including to members of the UK public on LinkedIn, AstraZeneca was ruled in breach of the following clauses of the 2019 Code:

- Clause 2** - Bringing discredit upon, and reducing confidence in, the pharmaceutical industry
- Clause 3.1** - Promoting an unlicensed medicine
- Clause 9.1** - Failing to maintain high standards

Allergan Limited – Case AUTH/3431/11/20

For promoting Botox (botulinum toxin type A), a prescription only medicine to the public, on social media, Allergan was ruled in breach of the following clauses of the 2019 Code:

- Clause 2** - Bringing discredit upon, and reducing confidence in, the pharmaceutical industry
- Clause 9.1** - Failing to maintain high standards
- Clause 26.1** - Promoting a prescription only medicine to the public

In addition, the Code of Practice Appeal Board required Allergan to be publicly reprimanded for its widespread use of social media which promoted a prescription only medicine to the public.

The case reports and public reprimand are available at www.pmcpa.org.uk.