

PMCPA

Prescription Medicines
Code of Practice Authority

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 case ruled in breach of Clause 2 of the Code (a sign of particular censure) is highlighted below.

Astellas Pharma Ltd has breached the ABPI Code of Practice for the Pharmaceutical Industry and brought discredit upon, and reduced confidence in, the pharmaceutical industry.

For paying health professionals to attend a series of advisory boards which were at least in part disguised promotion, and thus in effect giving what amounted to an inducement to prescribe, administer or recommend a medicine, Astellas 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 12.1** - Organising an activity which was in part disguised promotion.
- Clause 18.1** - Paying a fee to attend a promotional event which was, in effect, an inducement to prescribe, administer or recommend a medicine.
- Clause 20** - Failing to comply with the requirements relating to consultants.

The full case report, Case AUTH/2290/12/09, was published in the PMCPA May Code of Practice Review and is 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 12 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2DY or complaints@pmcpa.org.uk.

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