



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) are highlighted below.

Croma Pharma, AstraZeneca, AbbVie and Daiichi Sankyo have breached the ABPI Code of Practice for the Pharmaceutical Industry and brought discredit upon, and reduced confidence in, the pharmaceutical industry.

Croma Pharma – Cases AUTH/3644/5/22 and AUTH/3694/10/22

For the poor impression created by the arrangements of a Letybo (botulinum toxin type A) launch symposium held in Monaco which was such that hospitality, including the venue, did not appear to be secondary to the main purpose of the event, which was compounded by signage at the event and noting that hospitality provided, in particular at international meetings, attracted public scrutiny, Croma Pharma was ruled in breach of the following Clauses of the 2021 Code:

- Clause 2** - Bringing discredit upon, and reducing confidence in, the pharmaceutical industry
- Clause 5.1** - Failing to maintain high standards
- Clause 10.1** - Providing inappropriate hospitality

AstraZeneca – Case AUTH/3678/8/22

For failing to include on the page of the printed journal advertisement where the prescribing information was not visible, reference to where it could be found; and because the advertisement misleadingly implied that all strengths of Symbicort could be prescribed for MART [maintenance and reliever therapy] when Symbicort 400/12 should be used as maintenance therapy only, and the points in small font at the very bottom of the page in question were wholly insufficient to qualify the misleading impression given and use of the higher Symbicort dose (400/12) for reliever therapy had the potential to impact patient safety, AstraZeneca was ruled in breach of the following clauses of the 2021 Code:

- Clause 2** - Bringing discredit upon, and reducing confidence in, the pharmaceutical industry
- Clause 5.1** - Failing to maintain high standards
- Clause 6.1** - Making a misleading claim
- Clause 6.2** - Making an unsubstantiated claim
- Clause 11.2** - Promotion inconsistent with the SPC
- Clause 12.7** - Failing to include on the pages of a printed journal advertisement where the prescribing information was not visible, reference to where it could be found

AbbVie – Case AUTH/3712/11/22

For the use of the imagery of a young female surfing that did not reflect the typical patient with moderate to severe psoriatic arthritis and could not be substantiated and for the use of imagery of a young female in relation to Rinvoq (upadacitinib), a product with a known risk of foetal harm without highlighting that there were restrictions on use in this population which had the potential to impact patient safety, AbbVie was ruled in breach of the following clauses of the 2021 Code:

- Clause 2** - Bringing discredit upon, and reducing confidence in, the pharmaceutical industry
- Clause 5.1** - Failing to maintain high standards
- Clause 6.1** - Failing to ensure material was sufficiently complete and not misleading
- Clause 6.2** - Making an unsubstantiated claim
- Clause 6.3** - Failing to ensure artwork conformed to the letter and spirit of the Code

Daiichi Sankyo – Case AUTH/3649/5/22

For failing to make immediately apparent to health professionals in the body of promotional material which referred to the therapeutic use of Nilemdo (bempedoic acid) or Nustendi (bempedoic acid and ezetimibe) in combination with a statin that there was a contraindication regarding concomitant use with simvastatin >40mg daily, and for failing to comply with its undertaking provided in Case AUTH/3504/2/21, Daiichi Sankyo was ruled in breach of the following Clauses of the 2021 Code:

- Clause 2** - Bringing discredit upon, and reducing confidence in, the pharmaceutical industry
- Clause 3.3** - Failing to comply with an undertaking
- Clause 5.1** - Failing to maintain high standards
- Clause 6.1** - Misleading impression provided

The case reports are available at www.pmcpa.org.uk.

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 2nd Floor, Goldings House, Hay's Galleria, 2 Hay's Lane, London, SE1 2HB 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.