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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.

Roche Products Limited has breached the ABPI Code of Practice for the Pharmaceutical Industry and brought discredit upon, and reduced confidence in, the pharmaceutical industry.

For inappropriately supplying between 2003 and 2005 Xenical to the operator of private diet clinics (who was not a health professional), Roche was ruled to have, in effect, sold a prescription only medicine to a member of the public; in that regard its actions were possibly prejudicial to patient safety. In addition, Roche was ruled in breach of the Code for agreeing to provide £55,000, which was part paid, to that individual to purchase another private diet clinic. Roche 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 a high standard.
- Clause 18.1** - Failing to comply with the requirements for the provision of medical and educational goods and services.

Roche was also publicly reprimanded and suspended from membership of the ABPI for a minimum of six months from 14 July 2008.

The full case reports (Case AUTH/2099/2/08 and AUTH/2100/2/08) were published in the PMCPA August 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 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.