

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.

Stiefel Laboratories Ltd and Ferring Pharmaceuticals Ltd have each breached the ABPI Code of Practice for the Pharmaceutical Industry and brought discredit upon, and reduced confidence in, the pharmaceutical industry.

Stiefel – Case AUTH/2255/8/09

For presenting the output of a company run meeting as an independent supplement to a medical journal, Stiefel was ruled in breach of the following clause of the Code:

- Clause 2** - Bringing discredit upon and reducing confidence in the pharmaceutical industry.

Ferring – Case AUTH/2257/8/09

For its public relations agency sending unapproved copy about Firmagon (a prescription only medicine) to a patient organisation for publication on its website, Ferring 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 14.3** - Failing to certify information provided to a patient organisation.
- Clause 22.2** - Encouraging members of the public to ask their health professional to prescribe a specific prescription only medicine.
- Clause 23.6** - Influencing the text of patient organisation material in a manner favourable to a company's commercial interests.

The full case reports were published in the PMCPA November 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.