



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.

AstraZeneca and Moderna have breached the ABPI Code of Practice for the Pharmaceutical Industry and brought discredit upon, and reduced confidence in, the pharmaceutical industry.

AstraZeneca – Case AUTH/3729/1/23

For promoting capivasertib on LinkedIn prior to the grant of its marketing authorisation, in a post that contained the strong phrase 'remarkable benefits', and the impression created by very senior staff acting contrary to the company's global social media policy, 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 3.1** - Promoting a medicine prior to the grant of the marketing authorisation
- Clause 5.1** - Failing to maintain high standards

AstraZeneca – Case AUTH/3774/6/23

For promoting durvalumab outside of the terms of its marketing authorisation and promoting tremelimumab prior to the grant of its marketing authorisation by interacting with two LinkedIn posts, and the impression created by very senior staff acting contrary to the company's global social media policy, 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 a medicine prior to the grant of the marketing authorisation
- Clause 9.1** - Failing to maintain high standards
- Clause 26.1** - Promoting a prescription only medicine to the public

Moderna – Case AUTH/3783/6/23

For paying a UK health professional to attend a meeting that did not meet the criteria for a genuine advisory board and therefore paying a fee to attend, in effect, a promotional meeting that

detailed an investigational product which at the time did not have a marketing authorisation and an indication for a medicine that was inconsistent with its summary of product characteristics, Moderna 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 11.1** - Promoting a medicine prior to the grant of its marketing authorisation
- Clause 11.2** - Promoting a medicine in a manner that was inconsistent with its summary of product characteristics
- Clause 19.1** - Provision of a pecuniary advantage or benefit to a health professional in connection with the promotion of medicines or as an inducement to prescribe, supply, administer and/or recommend a medicine

Moderna – Case AUTH/3815/8/23

In relation to unacceptable use of imagery and language in tweets and a linked article relating to patient recruitment advertising for a clinical trial, none of which had been subject to the regulatory approval process, Moderna 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 5.5** - Failing to be sufficiently clear as to the company's role and involvement
- Clause 6.1** - Making a misleading claim

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.