

**Sophie Hibburd**

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**From:** BRISBANE DOCTOR, NAME WITHHELD  
**Sent:** Friday, 30 August 2013 11:15 PM  
**To:** Sophie Hibburd  
**Subject:** Submission in regards to code of conduct

**Categories:** CODE REVIEW

Dear Sir/Mdm,

I wish to submit my view that Medicines Australia has gone too far in its efforts to police the ethics of marketing by the pharmaceutical industry to doctors.

To the extent that the distribution of pens with printed company logos is forbidden, wearing of T-shirts with company logos during trade exhibitions held in conjunction with medical conferences is not allowed, that a proposal has been made to expose or publish details of trivial expenditures by company marketing representatives buying coffee or sandwiches for a doctor's lunch during his/her visit to the doctor's surgery, to restricting sponsorship of accommodation for medical meetings to include only an overnight stay, I feel that the Code of Conduct of Medicines Australia insults and demeans doctors, presuming us to be rather gullible and mindless, susceptible to simple marketing tactics that could persuade us to prescribe one drug or another.

To even consider linking marketing activities to a doctor's medical registration details and publish it as if it were an admission of guilt by the doctor and a badge of shame to be announced to all, is simply rude and intrusive to the doctor's privacy. It has no bearing on the doctor's professional medical conduct, his ability to treat his patients appropriately and dangerously may even inadvertently hurt his professional reputation which in the end, in terms of his medical registration, should always primarily reflect his medical conduct and not his relationship with his local pharmaceutical representative !

It is very surprising to me that Medicines Australia should consider that highly intelligent and motivated doctors should in general, prescribe medicines not based on their knowledge of solid research data or evidence of clinical trials, but decide on their prescribing patterns based on a pharmaceutical company's marketing gimmicks. This approach undervalues, disrespects and under-estimates the moral and professional values of all of us doctors.

Moreover, the application of many of the current stipulations in the Code of Conduct by Medicines Australia specifically to the medical profession alone is unfair and unjust as it targets the medical profession in isolation when such levels of transparency and regulation does not exist for a dozen other important professional roles in society including lawyers, politicians, pharmacists, dentists etc. In no other profession has their own members decided to restrict industry marketing to the point of triviality, severely impacting even on the educational activities of the profession itself !

I would hope that Medicines Australia would waste less time focussing on trying to hand-hold doctors and interfering with every little aspect of their relationship with the pharmaceutical industry and spend more time on tackling important medical issues such as the spread of generic drugs in the market, rampant overuse of antibiotics, patient education, doctors' education etc.

Thank you