

# Medicines Australia Code of Conduct: breaches

Medicines Australia (formerly the Australian Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association) has a code of conduct to guide the promotion of prescription drugs in Australia.<sup>1</sup> The latest edition of the Code of Conduct states that Medicines Australia will provide information on its web site about complaints involving activities directed towards members of the public.<sup>2</sup> It is pleasing to report that Medicines Australia has expanded its external reporting by posting details of **all** the complaints the Code of Conduct Committee resolved between July and December 2003.<sup>3</sup>

In this six-month period 21 complaints were resolved. Most of the complaints were made by rival companies, but four were made by health professionals, and the Therapeutic Goods Administration made two. Four complaints were withdrawn

and four complaints contained no breaches. This leaves 13 complaints where at least one breach was found (Table 1). Four companies appealed against being found in breach, but these appeals were not upheld.

## References

1. Roughead EE. The Australian Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association Code of Conduct: guiding the promotion of prescription medicines. *Aust Prescr* 1999;22:78-80.
2. Medicines Australia. Code of Conduct. 14th ed. Canberra: Medicines Australia; 2003.
3. <http://www.medicinesaustralia.com.au/public/cocCommittee-Outcomes-July-Dec03.pdf> [cited 2004 May 14]

Table 1

### Breaches of the Code of Conduct July–December 2003<sup>3</sup>

Company	Drug involved in complaint		Sanction imposed by Code of Conduct Committee
	Brand name	Generic name	
Aventis	Actonel	risedronate	Withdrawal of promotional material. Corrective letter. \$25 000 fine.
Bayer and GlaxoSmithKline	Levitra	vardenafil	Withdrawal of promotional material.
Eli Lilly	Cialis	tadalafil	Withdrawal of promotional material. Corrective letter. Changes to web site.
Lundbeck	Ebixa Media release	memantine	\$15 000 fine.
Merck Sharp & Dohme	Fosamax	alendronate	Withdrawal of promotional material.
	Zocor	simvastatin	Withdrawal of promotional material. \$10 000 fine.
	Zocor	simvastatin	Withdrawal of promotional material. Corrective advertisement and letter.
Novartis	Famvir	famciclovir	Withdrawal of promotional material. \$10 000 fine.
Pfizer	Lipitor	atorvastatin	Withdrawal of promotional material.
	Somac	pantoprazole	Withdrawal of promotional material. Corrective advertisement.
Roche	Pegasys Trade display	peginterferon alfa-2a	Withdrawal of promotional material.
Servier	Coversyl Display of materials previously in breach	perindopril	Withdrawal of promotional material. \$30 000 fine.
Wyeth	Efexor Internet publication	venlafaxine	Withdrawal of promotional material. Corrective e-mail.