

## Medicines Australia Code of Conduct

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> An updated version of the Medicines Australia Code of Conduct was implemented earlier this year.<sup>2</sup> The revisions will have taken into account some of the complaints received in the previous year.

The report of the Code of Conduct Committee for 2002 says that 49 complaints were received. Nine complaints were withdrawn and some are unresolved, so the report details the assessment of 36 cases.<sup>3</sup>

Most of the complaints came from rival pharmaceutical companies, but six came from health professionals and three were made by the Australian Consumers Association. Nine complaints did not involve a breach of the Code of Conduct and two more were dismissed by the Code of Conduct Appeals

Committee. This leaves 25 complaints in which at least one breach of the Code was found (Table 1). Details of these breaches can be found in the report.<sup>3</sup>

### NOTE

The Medicines Australia Code of Conduct is available from:  
Medicines Australia  
Level 1, 16 Napier Close  
DEAKIN ACT 2600  
Tel: (02) 6282 6888  
Web site: [www.medicinesaustralia.com.au](http://www.medicinesaustralia.com.au)

### 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; 2002.
3. Medicines Australia. Code of Conduct Annual Report 2002. Canberra: Medicines Australia; 2002.

Table 1

### Breaches of the Code of Conduct July 2001–June 2002

Company	Complaint		Sanction imposed by Code of Conduct Committee
	Drug brand name	Drug generic name	
Abbot Australasia	Reductil	sibutramine	Withdrawal of promotional material
Alcon Laboratories	Travatan	travoprost	Withdrawal of promotional material
AstraZeneca	Oxis Turbuhaler	eformoterol	Withdrawal of promotional material, promotional material to be recovered from recipients
Aventis Pharma	Rulide	roxithromycin	Withdrawal of promotional material. Corrective letter to be sent to all general practitioners. \$20 000 fine (reduced to \$10 000 on appeal)
	Rulide	roxithromycin	Withdrawal of promotional material
	Tritace	ramipril	Withdrawal of promotional material. \$5000 fine
	Specialist symposium (hospitality out of proportion to educational content)		\$10 000 fine
Baxter Healthcare (non-member)	Suprane	desflurane	Withdrawal of promotional material. Corrective letter to be sent to anaesthetists.
Bristol-Myers Squibb	Pravachol	pravastatin	\$40 000 fine (reduced to \$20 000 on appeal)
CSL Ltd	Flomax	tamsulosin	Withdrawal of promotional material
	Vaqta	hepatitis A vaccine	Withdrawal of promotional material. Corrective advertising to address potentially misleading information. \$20 000 fine
GlaxoSmithKline	Lamictal	lamotrigine	Withdrawal of promotional material. Corrective letter to be sent to general practitioners and neurologists.
	Seretide	fluticasone	Corrective letter to be sent to general practitioners and specialists
Lundbeck Australia	Cipramil	citalopram	Material not to be used again. Corrective letter to be sent to recipients of the material.
Merck Sharp & Dohme	Fosamax	alendronate	Withdrawal of promotional material
Novartis Pharmaceuticals	Famvir	famciclovir	Withdrawal of promotional material
	Zelmac	tegaserod	Withdrawal of promotional material
Pfizer	Aricept	donepezil	Withdrawal of promotional material. Corrective advertising required and a corrective letter to be sent to all doctors.
	Aricept	donepezil	Withdrawal of promotional material
	Norvasc	amlodipine	Withdrawal of promotional material. Corrective advertising required and a corrective letter to be sent to all general practitioners. \$50 000 fine
	Zeldox (unapproved product)		Promotional activity should not occur again. \$15 000 fine
Pharmacia Australia	Somac	pantoprazole	Withdrawal of promotional material. \$50 000 fine for repeating previous breaches
Roche Products	Xenical	orlistat	Withdrawal of promotional material
Servier Laboratories (non-member)	Coversyl	perindopril	Withdrawal of promotional material. Corrective letter to be sent to all general practitioners.
Wyeth Australia	Educational meeting (hospitality out of proportion to educational content)		Activity should not occur again