

use for people with type 2 diabetes who require insulin therapy'. The NICE recommended that insulin glargine should only be considered, in type 2 diabetes, for patients:

- who require assistance from a carer or healthcare professional to administer their insulin injections

- whose lifestyle is significantly restricted by recurrent symptomatic hypoglycaemic episodes
- who would otherwise need twice-daily basal insulin injections in combination with oral antidiabetic drugs.

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.^{1,2} The annual report of the Code of Conduct Committee for 2004 is now available on the Medicines Australia web site.³ Since the previous summary in *Australian Prescriber*⁴ the Code of Conduct Committee has resolved 17 complaints. In nine cases there was at least one breach of the Code (Table 1).

Only three complaints were made by healthcare professionals. Most of the complaints were made by companies about their rivals' promotional materials. These promotional materials have to be withdrawn if they are in breach of the Code, however by the time a complaint is resolved the advertising campaigns may have concluded.

There seems to be a growing concern about the promotion of prescription medicines to the general public. Several

complaints involved the connection between companies' products and the information on web sites about related topics. There was also a complaint about a television advertisement, but this was not upheld. More details about the complaints can be found in the annual report.³

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. Medicines Australia. Code of Conduct Annual Report 2004. Canberra: Medicines Australia; 2004. <http://www.medicinesaustralia.com.au> [cited 2004 Nov 8]
4. Medicines Australia Code of Conduct: breaches. *Aust Prescr* 2004;27:60.

Table 1

Breaches of the Code of Conduct January – June 2004

Company	Drug involved in complaint		Sanction imposed by Code of Conduct Committee
	Brand name	Generic name	
AstraZeneca	Nexium	esomeprazole	withdrawal of promotional material \$10 000 fine
Eli Lilly	Cialis web site	tadalafil	withdrawal of reference to prescription-only drug
GlaxoSmithKline	Seretide	fluticasone/salmeterol	withdrawal of promotional material \$5000 fine
Merck Sharp & Dohme	starter packs supplied to a member of the public		\$30 000 fine
Novo Nordisk	NovoSeven	eptacog alfa	withdrawal of promotional material corrective letter to specialists \$20 000 fine
Pfizer	Viagra web site	sildenafil	withdrawal of reference to prescription-only drug
Sanofi-Synthelabo	Panadeine Forte	paracetamol/codeine	withdrawal of promotional material \$10 000 fine
Schering Plough	Caelyx	doxorubicin	withdrawal of promotional material corrective letter to specialists \$10 000 fine
Schering Plough	Pegatron media release	peginterferon alfa-2b	withdrawal of promotional material corrective letter to specialists \$30 000 fine