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FAQs



Ethical relationships between
health professionals and **industry**

3. Funding from a pharmaceutical company to attend a conference

I have been offered funding from a pharmaceutical company to attend a conference. Should I accept this?

What are the risks and benefits of accepting such funding?

Attendance at meetings, industry sponsored or otherwise, provides opportunities for learning, networking and career development. Any event organised or sponsored by a pharmaceutical company could, however, be a marketing opportunity and carries a risk of influencing the capacities of clinical practitioners to make disinterested decisions on behalf of their patients. This risk is potentially exacerbated by the receipt of funding to attend the conference. It might also erode public and professional perception of your objectivity, integrity and professional judgement.

Would I need to report this activity? If so, where and to whom?

The nature of industry support, and any obligations associated with it, should be declared openly in relevant circumstances (e.g., to professional bodies, employers, committees, students, on research articles and in relevant clinical situations). You should also be aware that, in Australia, the Medicines Australia Code of Conduct requires companies to publicly report when a company pays a healthcare professional for their service or provides financial support for them.

Should I accept support for my partner or family to travel with me?

Sponsorship (either direct or indirect) to cover the cost of travel, attendance or meals for family or friends is never acceptable.

Should I accept funding for accommodation, meals and other travel-related expenses?

The more support you accept, the more likely you are to feel the need (conscious or unconscious) to reciprocate by, for example, recommending the company's products or agreeing to further contact. It also makes it more likely that your judgment will be influenced by the relationship with industry and that there will be a real or perceived conflict of interest.



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