2013 Prescrire Information Awards

The Information Awards focus on the information provided to Prescrire by the pharmaceutical companies whose products we examined in the New Products section of our French edition in 2013.

Prescrire's reviews dealing with new drugs and indications are based on a thorough literature search for documents relating to the drug's assessment, especially clinical trial data.

In addition to textbooks and bibliographic databases, *Prescrire* editors search the websites of drug regulatory agencies, organisations that carry out pharmacoeconomic evaluations, health technology assessment agencies and other bodies specialising in the relevant therapeutic field. *Prescrire* regularly asks drug regulatory agencies to provide specific information and unpublished documents. We also search other independent journals who are members of the International Society of Drug Bulletins (ISDB), and any independent organisations that have evaluated the drug in question.

Drug companies also hold a wealth of data. We also request relevant information from the companies that market each drug we analyse in France, to ensure that we take into account all data, including unpublished data, used to justify marketing approval or to modify an existing marketing authorisation. These unpublished data, such as expert reviews and Periodic Safety Update Reports (PSURs) are held both by the regulatory agency that examined the application and by the company that obtained marketing authorisation for its product.

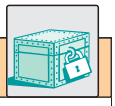
As is the case with the other *Prescrire* Awards, a systematic and totally independent process is used to grant the Information Awards (rules available on our website, at english.prescrire.org).

Rewarding accountable companies. Some drug companies respond to our requests for information in a timely manner and provide us with thorough and relevant information, including unpublished data. These companies are placed on the Honours List. The companies rated as "Outstanding" provided us with exhaustive and detailed information, without delay and sometimes without being asked.

Honours List (in alphabetical order)

- Outstanding: **EG Labo**
- Followed by: **Chauvin, GlaxoSmithKline, Lucane Pharma, Medac, Novartis Vaccines and Diagnostics, Reckitt Benckiser Pharmaceuticals, and Viropharma**

Red Cards (in alphabetical order)



- **Bayer Santé, Boehringer Ingelheim, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Gilead Sciences, Novartis Pharma, Pfizer, Roche, Servier, and Takeda**

What do unhelpful companies have to hide? Other drug companies either fail to respond to our requests for information or provide only limited data. Some of them delay as long as possible before responding and then fail to provide solid, exploitable data. Their pretexts include: lack of time; administrative delays; confidentiality issues; or objections from the parent company. Some companies appear to withhold information in retaliation for an unfavourable review in *Prescrire*.

"Red cards" for withholding information are a way of highlighting persistent shortcomings in the provision of information by certain drug companies.

Drug companies must take up the challenge of providing quality information. Some drug companies continue to provide *Prescrire* with high-quality information, reflecting a responsible attitude towards patients and healthcare professionals. Others, unfortunately, are more concerned with commercial promotion and appear to see no need for providing thorough and reliable information on the products they market. Some companies choose to withhold unfavourable data on their products to safeguard short-term interests. They clearly fail to realise that a company's transparency is evidence of its long-term credibility and is one of the criteria used to choose a particular drug, along with its efficacy, safety, ease of use and price.

Let's hope more companies take up this challenge.

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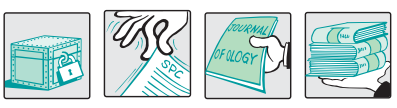
Whenever we examine a new drug or indication, the review is accompanied by one of four pictograms rating the transparency of the company concerned for their response to our request for information about their product (for details search for "ratings system" online at english.prescrire.org).



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