The “just say no…” Charter, 2005

Association Mieux Prescrire (AMP) is the owner and administrator of la revue Prescrire and Prescrire International. AMP seeks to defend a number of core values such as independence, ethical care, and placing the patient at the centre of the decision-making process and health care systems.

AMP has around 300 members who are increasingly aware that there are many obstacles to these core values. At its December 2004 General Assembly, it was therefore decided that health professionals must sign on this ‘Just say no…’ Charter every year in order to be granted AMP membership. This obviously applies to Prescrire editors.

The signatories of this charter wish to ensure that health professionals’ activities and decisions are dedicated solely to serving patients’ best interests.

We are aware that health care, teaching and research activities can be subject to influences that can undermine health professionals’ independence and ethics, such as:

- economic and financial influence from pharmaceuticals firms through direct and indirect promotional campaigns aimed at patients and health professionals, through the funding of information resources and initial or permanent training initiatives, and pressure on the public authorities;

- economic, political and financial influence from national or supranational bodies responsible for drafting or applying regulations or for managing preventive, diagnostic and treatment resources;

- the personal interests of the professionals themselves; we are aware that patients too can be influenced by direct or indirect approaches, biased information and funding with a hidden agenda;

- funding of patient groups by the pharmaceuticals industry;

- dissemination of unsubstantiated information, or even pure advertising by drugs manufacturers, via the consumer media, opinion formers etc.;

- the organisation of so-called health awareness campaigns by the industry. The signatories pledge to work towards quality care and to:

- refuse any direct participation that goes against this aim, especially drugs manufacturers’ involvement in health issues;

- refuse benefits in kind, gifts and subsidies from pharmaceuticals firms and other bodies likely to be serving their own interests rather than those of the patients, both individually and on behalf of the professional bodies they serve on;

- be wary of pharmaceuticals firms’ promotional activities (advertising, sales reps’ visits, “opinion-formers”, etc.), so as to distinguish, or at least compare them, with independent source of information;

- choose instead independent sources of information and favour comparative information;

- choose, whenever possible, professional, initial and permanent training that is independent from any kind of subsidy from pharmaceuticals firms or other bodies likely to be serving their own interests rather than those of the patients;

- provide patients with information from reliable, quality sources so as to share decision-making with them on the basis of dependable information.

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