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Prescrire's "Non merci..." Charter = no conflicts of interest

In order to deliver the best possible care, healthcare professionals need to base their work and their decisions on reliable and independent information. In accordance with Prescrire's "Non merci…" ("No thanks") Charter, the managers and Editorial Staff sign a yearly statement of absence of conflicts of interest.

The "Non merci..." Charter 2011

The signatories of this Charter wish to ensure that the work and the decisions of health professionals are based solely upon patients' best interests.

We are aware that health care delivery, teaching and research are all activities that can be subject to influences inconsistent with independence and with professional ethics, including:

- economic and financial pressures from companies doing business in the health care arena, through direct and indirect promotional campaigns targeting patients and health professionals, through the funding of information resources and initial or continuing education, and through pressure on the public authorities;
- economic, political and financial pressures from national or supranational organisations responsible for drafting or implementing 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 appeals, biased information and self-serving assistance programmes, including:

- corporate funding of patient groups;
- dissemination of unsubstantiated information, or even corporate promotional material, by the mass media, opinion leaders, etc.;
- organisation of so-called health awareness campaigns by corporate sponsors.

The signatories of this Charter pledge to work in favour of quality care and:

- to refrain from holding any direct interest contrary to this aim, particularly as regards companies doing business in the health care arena;
- to turn down, whether on their own behalf or on behalf of any professional bodies in which they are active, any benefits in kind, gifts or subsidies from companies doing business in the health care arena, or from other organisations likely to pursue their own interests rather than those of patients;
- to adopt a critical attitude toward corporate promotional activities (advertising, sales reps' visits, opinion leaders), in order to set aside such information, or at least to compare it with independent sources of information;
- to choose instead independent sources of information, and to favour comparative information;
- to choose, whenever possible, initial and continuing education programmes that are free from any type of support from companies doing business in the health care arena, or from any other organisations likely to pursue interests other than those of patients;
- to provide patients with information from reliable, quality sources, in order to share decision-making with them on the basis of dependable information.

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