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Re.: Relation of ESPGHAN to CME activities by Industry and selection of abstracts from industry

Dear Riccardo,

I. CME Activities sponsored by Industry

The Ethics Committee submits hereby its opinion on the question of CME activities of outside industry companies outside European borders in Asia and Africa. The base for the opinion of the committee is the accepted "*Policy on Conflict of Interest and Relationships with Industry and Other Organizations*", which was accepted by council. In particular the statements in 3.1 *Principles of Corporate Sponsorships and Partnerships for ESPGHAN endorsed CME activities* apply, when the involvement of Danone and Nestlé in Asia or Africa are concerned. In principle ESPGHAN can accept support from industry and from other outside sources for CME activities in and outside of Europe under the following conditions:

- a. ESPGHAN needs to appoint a course/program director, who will be responsible for the organization and content of all educational activities endorsed by the society and there can be no control of content by any sponsoring agent. In the case of our Africa CME activities, the conditions are fulfilled. A steering committee for this enterprise was chosen and the steering committee elaborated the program of the course together with the independent South African colleagues. The support from Nestlé is an unrestricted educational grant to the society, whereby the society is responsible as to how the financial support is spent. The society chooses the faculty, no honoraria are being payed. Only travel money and accommodation are offered. Time and location are chosen by ESPGHAN.
- b. If these conditions according to paragraph 3.1 of the Policy Statement are applied to the Danone CME activities, than there are certain adaptations necessary to that program. First a program/course director needs to be chosen by ESPGHAN. He/she should be responsible for the content, location and time frame of the program. The support by Danone should be given to ESPGHAN as unrestricted educational grant. Under these conditions the CME activities under the name of ESPGHAN can be sponsored by Danone. However organization in Asia or Africa of this CME activity should be fully in the hand of the program/course director chosen by ESPGHAN under the condition expressed in our Policy Statement

The committee supports all the CME activities of ESPGHAN in order to fulfil our mission outside of Europe for the benefit of local doctors. In order to keep the independence of the society and its reputation, the committee

reemphasizes the “*Principles of Corporate Sponsorship and Partnership for ESPGHAN endorsed CME activities*” of our Policy Statement on this issue.

II. Abstracts to the Annual Meeting submitted by Industry and from countries with low infrastructure

The second issue concerns the acceptance of abstracts from authors having performed the research in conjunction with industry. It was argued by members of the council, that this research was supported by so much more money and infrastructure, that their research can be so much better than for example an abstracts from countries with less developed infrastructure.

The current mutual understanding by the society is, that the scientific quality is the sole condition for getting high or low scores by the reviewers. As the review process is anonymous, the reviewers cannot distinguish, if the abstract submitted is supported by industry or not. The committee feels that this review process should not be changed and remain anonymous.

The possibilities for the society in deciding abstracts are to proceed as in the past and accept them by scientific quality alone regardless of their origin. The alternative could be a certain restriction of acceptance of the number of abstracts coming from industry. This would not change the review process, but would require a sorting of all abstracts accepted with industry support. Than a certain percentage of these abstracts could be accepted which can for example 10% of all abstracts accepted. On the other hand a section for low infrastructure countries could be created, where also 10% of the abstracts could be accepted. This can balance than the advantage of abstracts coming industry driven research. The matter is very delicate, but we would propose the following solution:

- a. creation of a section for abstract acceptance particularly of countries with low infrastructure up to 10% of all accepted abstracts. These abstracts are collected and reviewed together in a special review process, but anonymously as the others.
- b. limitation of acceptance of industry guided research abstracts to a limiting percentage, for example not more than 10% of accepted abstracts.

That would create a situation of 20% of accepted abstracts in a whole, divided into two sections. It would allow acceptance of abstracts from less developed countries at the same rate as industry triggered research. And 80% of all abstracts would still fulfil our standard review process.

The Committee feels that there is no easy solution to the questions of abstracts coming from different backgrounds, but we can foresee, that there might be a possibility to build special sections as outlined above.

Best regards



Prof. Michael J. Lentze
Chairman of the Ethics Committee

