

Press Release: Health Action International Launches Educational Guide to Help EU Healthcare Students & Professionals Counter Ill Effects of Pharmaceutical Marketing

Press Release | 25 October 2016 | [Download Link](#)

AMSTERDAM—Health Action International (HAI) today released a new book that teaches healthcare students and professionals in the European Union (EU) how to identify and respond to marketing tactics used by pharmaceutical companies to increase sales of their products.

The book, entitled *'Fact or Fiction? What Healthcare Professionals Need to Know About Pharmaceutical Marketing in the European Union'*, explains the negative impact of pharmaceutical marketing on healthcare professionals' prescribing and dispensing practices. It also outlines current EU regulations for pharmaceutical marketing, as well as the ongoing problem of industry self-regulation for marketing breaches by companies.

The need for the book stems from research that shows that healthcare professionals are highly exposed to pharmaceutical marketing activities. Yet, education about how to critically appraise pharmaceutical marketing remains inadequate. Indeed, many healthcare professionals fail to recognise that they are personally influenced by it.

"Studies have found that many healthcare professionals believe that their colleagues are influenced by pharmaceutical marketing, such as receiving free gifts and paying for conference accommodation and expenses, but believe that they are personally not influenced," said Ancel.la Santos, Policy Advisor at Health Action International.

"In response to this finding, we developed this book to help healthcare professionals detect the many, often subtle, ways pharmaceutical marketing can influence their clinical practice without them being fully conscious of it," said Santos.

The book, which uses fully referenced information sources, a case study, group activities and exercises, has been sent to universities, medical and student associations, and civil society groups across Europe. These organisations have all been encouraged to share the report with their members and incorporate its content into their curriculums and training programs.

The book can be downloaded free of charge on HAI's website at <http://bit.ly/2f3BwGN>.

Note to Editors

The report brings to light some concerning statistics on pharmaceutical marketing education:

- 85.2% of surveyed French medical students felt inadequately educated about conflicts of interest.
- While 45.1% of surveyed German medical students believed that gifts would influence their prescribing behavior, only 24.1% believed it would affect their own prescribing habits.
- Pharmaceutical companies spend 23% of their turnover on marketing - more than they spend on research and development

For comment, interview requests and additional information:

James Still, Communications Advisor

Health Action International

Email: james@haiweb.org / Office: +31 20 412 4523

Web: www.haiweb.org