

Report | The Sun Shines on Europe: transparency of financial relationships in the healthcare sector

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Pharmaceutical companies employ a wide range of promotional activities to increase medicines prescription rates and maximise their profit. Some of the strategies companies use to influence healthcare professionals include the provision of hospitality to attend events, free meals and gift-giving. At the same time, healthcare professionals might be part of companies' advisory boards and receive speaking fees. At the core of the issue around these types of activities is the reality that financial conflicts of interest raise serious concerns about the objectivity of medical research and the commitment of healthcare professionals to patients' best interest.

In recent years, several countries in the European Union have enacted laws to increase the transparency of financial relationships between the pharmaceutical industry and healthcare professionals. In other countries, disclosure is primarily managed through self-regulation by the pharmaceutical industry. To contribute to discussions on the transparency of industry payments, Health Action International has published a report titled '*The Sun Shines on Europe: Transparency of financial relationships in the healthcare sector*' which takes a look at a range of transparency initiatives in Europe and issues key recommendations on the best way forward.

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