

Marketing illness and cure : Ethics of relations with pharmacological industry

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Current Psychiatry. Ain Shams University (Print).

2010 v17 n2

The relationship between health care professionals and drug companies is a complex relationship. The widespread commercialization of health and the increasing focus on health issues in the media have created a climate of apprehension, insecurity, and alarm about ethics. It is interestingly noticed that the rate of diagnosis of disorders increased very much after promotion of new drugs for such disorders. Moreover, psychiatrists are accused by increasingly turning normal people into patients. This debate has focused attention on what some have named "disease-mongering"; taking something that is within normal bounds and labeling it a disease needing pharmaceutical treatment and widening the boundaries of treatable illness in order to expand markets for those who sell and deliver treatments. There is evidence that drug-marketing techniques affect doctors' prescribing practices. The study of prescribing behavior helps pharmaceutical companies to improve their marketing strategies by understanding issues such as; the psychology of how physicians think, feel, reason, and select between different alternatives. Speakers with pharmacological companies can be slowly seduced into questionable behaviors such as making pumped up claims of drugs effectiveness. It is surely the time to truly open our eyes to these issues to allow drug promotion with a balance to detect and treat only suffering cases. It is extremely important to take formal, publicly announced decisions to reduce financial reliance on the pharmaceutical industry. The ethical issues surrounding relationships with the pharmaceutical industry must be included in medical students and postgraduate training programs. We need a code of ethics aims to support an environment in which the general public can be confident that prescription and usage of drugs is performed according to the properties of each drug and needs of the patients. Hospitality offered in connection with scientific events may not lay down conditions for obligation on behalf of the healthcare professional to prescribe a specific product. The speakers should always maintain professional autonomy and commitment to the scientific method. Speakers and opinion leaders should not accept to take part in events sponsored from pharmacological companies if felt themselves forced to present controversial data on behalf of the company. We urge drug companies to be physician friendly, yet also ?patient-aware?. We should focus on helping our patients who struggle with illness, and we're proud of the progress we've made with pharmacological industry in addressing their needs during the last years.