

Bourke, Monica

Subject: RE: ACCC Pre-Decision Conference on draft determination of Medicines Australia Code

-----Original Message-----

From: Ken Harvey
Sent: Wednesday, 18 November 2009 4:33 PM
To: Kell, Peter
Cc: Chadwick, Richard; Bourke, Monica; Palisi, Joanne
Subject: Re: ACCC Pre-Decision Conference on draft determination of Medicines Australia Code

Dear Peter, et al.,

First of all, congratulations to you and your team for the excellent Chairing and organisation of this multi-site, multi-sectoral, video-conference.

The pre-decision conference provided a unique opportunity for interested stakeholders to debate suggestions for strengthening Medicines Australia Code of Conduct.

I also appreciated the opportunity to speak to my written submission.

I raised one additional matter; the difficulty of conducting research on Medicines Australia Code reports when the published data is provided as a PDF files.

I suggested that one way of assessing the impact of Medicines Australia Code was to track the number of complaints upheld against individual companies over time (and their severity as indicated by the magnitude of the fines applied).

This analysis would be facilitated if the summary tables provided in Code annual reports were consolidated each year into a standard spreadsheet format (e.g. Excel .xls) that was available for researchers to download.

In the same manner, the analysis of educational events would be assisted if this data was also available for download in a standard spreadsheet format.

A recent article by Jane Robinson et al, "Mandatory Disclosure of Pharmaceutical Industry-Funded Events for Health Professionals", noted that:

"We experienced considerable difficulty in accessing the Australian data, which are compiled in portable document format (pdf). As suggested in the US Sunshine Acts it is important that summary reports listing each function are accessible to the public in a searchable, downloadable, and analysable format".

See: <http://www.plosmedicine.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pmed.1000128>

I should be grateful if the ACCC could take these suggestions into consideration in their final determination of Medicines Australia Code.

Finally, the following article is relevant to parts of yesterday's discussion:

<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601109&sid=a4yVlnYxCGoA>

With best wishes,

Ken

--

Dr. Ken Harvey

Adjunct Senior Research Fellow

School of Public Health, La Trobe University <http://www.medreach.com.au> Mobile +614 1918 1910 Fax +613 9818 1875