

ESOMAR WORLD RESEARCH CODES & GUIDELINES

PHARMACEUTICAL MARKETING RESEARCH



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PHARMACEUTICAL MARKETING RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION

Pharmaceutical marketing research must always be conducted in full conformity with the principles laid down in the ICC/ESOMAR International Code of Marketing and Social Research Practice (1995). Because of the special characteristics and requirements of pharmaceutical research, however, it is necessary to specify how certain of these principles should be applied in this field of research and also to add a few further principles of conduct. These are set out in the Articles which follow.

The requirements of this and the main ICC/ESOMAR Code apply equally to research carried out directly by a department of the pharmaceutical company concerned (using either its own staff or outside interviewers sub-contracted for this purpose) and to research carried out by another organisation acting on the company's behalf.

Throughout these Codes the term "respondent" applies both to individual persons and to the organisations to which they belong and about whom they may be providing information.

The ICC/ESOMAR International Code is reprinted for easy reference at the end of the present document. As its Rule 2 points out, marketing research must always also conform to the national and

international legislation which applies in those countries involved in a given research project. Attention is called in particular to certain additional restrictions which apply in Germany and which are set out in a special 'Declaration' ('Erklärung') attached to the German-language version of the Code.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Marketing research must be unbiased and non-promotional. While research statistics and the information derived from them may subsequently be used for promotional purposes, the two activities of information collection and information use must be kept distinct. Marketing research must not be used as a direct means of promoting sales or influencing the opinions of respondents. Also, research must never be carried out in a way which could bring discredit upon, or reduce confidence in, the pharmaceutical industry.

1.1 A survey should not imply that it is independent of the pharmaceutical industry if it is in fact commissioned by, or for, one or more pharmaceutical companies

1.2 Any questionnaire or research guideline used in pharmaceutical

marketing research must avoid creating any impression that it seeks to disparage competing products or companies.

RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARDS RESPONDENTS

2.1 Doctors have a duty of confidentiality towards their patients. They can provide information about such patients in connection with a marketing research project only if this information is given in anonymous form, or as provided for under Article 2.2(b).

2.2 It is permissible for doctors to cooperate in a market research project among their patients:

(a) by acting as the intermediary between the researcher and appropriate patients by themselves inviting these patients to take part in the study (making clear to them that their cooperation is entirely voluntary), giving the questionnaires to the patients and returning the completed questionnaires to the researcher in anonymous form so that the identities of the patients concerned are at no stage revealed to the researcher, and/or

(b) by passing on to appropriate patients, without at that stage disclosing their identity to the researcher, an

invitation from the latter to participate in the survey. Any patients approached in this way can then choose whether or not they wish to cooperate in the survey, and if so, whether they agree to the disclosure of their names to the researcher. Such agreement on the part of the patient must be in writing.

2.3 If the information is being collected from respondents not by researchers but by sales representatives the latter must not represent themselves as belonging to a research organisation or department. They must make clear to the respondent their position and the company for which they work, and that while they are seeking information they are not conducting a confidential marketing research interview.

2.4 Where interviews or group discussions with doctors and other 'professional' respondents are recorded on audio- or video-tape the respondents' anonymity must be rigorously safeguarded. The required safeguards are set out in the ESOMAR Guideline on "Tape and video recording and client observation of interviews and group discussions (1996)".

2.5 Marketing research must never be used in order to obtain confidential information about competitive products

and companies from respondents who are bound by confidentiality agreements with those competitors.

RECOMPENSE OF RESPONDENTS

3.1 Where an interview is conducted with a 'professional' respondent such as a doctor, or with a member of staff of an organisation such as a hospital, it may be necessary and appropriate to recompense that person or organisation for the amount of their working time taken up by the interview. Such incentives or rewards to respondents should be kept to a minimum level proportionate to the amount of their time involved, and should not be more than the normal hourly fee charged by that person for their professional consultancy or advice.

RELATIONS WITH THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

4.1 Research among the general public which relates to current or potential new developments or treatments in the medical field must be carried out in a balanced and factual way so as to avoid the dangers:

- (a) of raising unfounded hopes of successful treatment of specific medical problems
- (b) of misleading the public with respect to the safety of a product
- (c) of encouraging members of the public to ask their doctor to prescribe a particular product.

When a marketing research project includes the actual usage by a respondent of active substance or any other medication or medical application which might cause an allergenic or other undesirable effect, it must be carried out according to GCP (Good Clinical Practice) guidelines.

EphMRA is an association of 40 European, research-based pharmaceutical companies that operate on a global perspective. It is linked with many of the largest pharmaceutical companies based in the USA and it provides a dedicated forum for strategic business intelligence and marketing research professionals.

Founded in 1948, ESOMAR is the leading international body for marketing and opinion research. It gathers together over 4000 members conducting and applying research in more than 100 countries and stands for the highest possible standards - both professionally and technically.

These recommendations have been issued as the Code of Conduct for pharmaceutical marketing research published by EPhMRA. The Code is mandatory for members of EPhMRA and for ESOMAR members when conducting pharmaceutical marketing research.

EphMrA is the dedicated forum for strategic business intelligence and marketing research professionals whose primary objective is to provide the opportunity for members to add value to their international marketing research and business intelligence activities by improving their skills and knowledge.

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ESOMAR is the world organisation for enabling better research into markets, consumers and societies.

With 4000 members in 100 countries, ESOMAR's aim is to promote the value of market and opinion research in illuminating real issues and bringing about effective decision-making.

To facilitate this ongoing dialogue, ESOMAR creates and manages a comprehensive programme of industry-specific and thematic conferences, publications and communications as well as actively advocating self-regulation and the worldwide code of practice.



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