



Working Together for Patients: Role of Consultancy



Collaboration between industry and health professionals benefits patients. It is a relationship that has delivered numerous innovative medicines and changed the way many diseases impact on our lives. Industry and health professionals collaborate across a range of activities from clinical research to sharing best clinical practice and exchanging information on how new medicines fit into the patient pathway.

What is consultancy?

Consultancy refers to activities through which healthcare professionals provide a company with a service for which they are paid. Companies enter into contractual arrangements with an HCP where there is a legitimate business or scientific need that cannot be satisfied by internal or other available sources, and based on the HCP's scientific/medical expertise, reputation, knowledge and experience in a particular therapeutic area.

This is applicable for a range of activities, such as speaking at meetings, chairing meetings, participating in advisory boards and providing other consultancy time. An example of other consultancy would be working with a healthcare professional to advise on an issue such as drug development, the role of a medicine in a patient pathway, health economics or best clinical practice.

Sharing knowledge is at the heart of the consultancy relationship. Companies can shape their future research programmes, based on expert opinion. Understanding how a medicine fits into the patient pathway can help companies provide the right information, education and training to support the introduction of a new medicine in order to ensure the best outcomes for patients. Clinicians can benefit from sharing ideas with colleagues or building their own understanding of the science behind new treatments. Patients are the ultimate winners from this information exchange, benefitting from new medicines that meet their healthcare needs.



What are the rules governing consultancy agreements?

The relationship between industry and health professionals is very well regulated. All interactions with HCPs are governed by EU Directive 2001/83/EC on the Community Code relating to medicinal products for human use, the EFPIA HCP Code, as well as applicable EFPIA Member Associations' national codes and any other applicable (local) internal policies, procedures and laws.

Participation in consultancy agreements requires an investment of time and expertise from HCPs, over and above their principle practices. Therefore it is appropriate that they are paid for their time and reimbursed for expenses, such as travel. Remuneration must be part of a written agreement, be strictly related and proportional to the services rendered, be in line with fair market value and comply with relevant Codes of Practice, regulations and laws. This remuneration must not constitute an inducement to recommend, prescribe, purchase, supply, sell or administer specific medicinal products.

A new era of transparency

In June 2016, companies will begin disclosing publicly payments made to health professionals for consultancy activities. The remuneration of HCPs' consultancy agreements will be disclosed in the category "Fees" for the remuneration, and in the category "Related expenses" for the travel and accommodation, if any. Bringing greater transparency to this, already well-regulated, vital relationship is about strengthening the basis for a trusting and transparent collaboration. Industry is being proactive, based on its commitment to this relationship.



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