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Ihre Zeichen, Ihre Nachricht vom

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Prof.Ro/Pe

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Legal Proposal on Information to Patients

Sir,

the pharmaceutical industry has a dire track record of misrepresenting effects and risks of medications to the medical profession (cf. Angell 2004; Deyo and Patrick 2005 for scores of examples; or most recently Lenzer and Brownlee 2008). The medical profession stepped up methodological rigor in clinical evaluations (e.g. evidence based medicine, Cochrane Collaboration) and codes of conduct in conflicts of interest.

Hence, at patient or citizen level, neither advertisement nor other information should be entrusted to the pharmaceutical industry. Truly independent information on prevention and treatment of health problems (not: on medications only) should be provided by state agencies or not-for-profit organizations committed to science and the public weal.

The above EU proposal would not improve the current situation but rather lead to a tremendous increase of bureaucratic and costly "co-regulation" as described in section 5 of the proposal.

The German Society of Social Medicine and Prevention strongly recommends abandoning this proposal completely.

Yours sincerely



Prof. Dr. med. Bernt-Peter Robra, M.P.H.

Angell M (2004): The Truth about the Drug Companies. New York: Random House

Deyo RA, Patrick LP (2005): Hope or hype – The obsession with medical advances and the high cost of false promises. New York: Amacom

Lenzer J, Brownlee S. An untold story? BMJ. 2008 Mar 8;336(7643):532-4. Epub 2008 Feb 27

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