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From: Günther Jonitz [g.jonitz@aekb.de]  
Sent: 01 April 2008 16:41  
To: NARHI Ulla (ENTR)  
Cc: ARLETT Peter (ENTR); FLORENZ Karl-Heinz (EP)  
Subject: 5/02/08 - Commission launches a Public consultation on the key ideas of a legal proposal on information to patients >>

Dear Ulla Närhi,

thanks for your engagement in European Pharmaceutical affairs. I am President of the Berlin Chamber of Physicians, Head of Quality Assurance Boards of the German Medical Association, Vice-Chairman of the German Coalition for Patient Safety, Advisor to the German Government in Patient Safety Affairs and member of the Patient Safety Working Group of the European High Level Group.

I strongly recommend not to put the pharmaceutical industry into any duty or opportunity to directly inform patients and consumers about the potential benefits of drugs. There is strong evidence that the pharmaceutical industry in the past did not inform the public adequately about risks or side effects of new drugs even with concrete knowledge about it (VIOXX, LIPOBAY etc...). There is absolutely no evidence that the pharmaceutical industry has changed this behaviour.

The pharmaceutical industry is not primarily committed to the sake of the patient but the sake of the stakeholders. Therefore it is more effective to promote so-called blockbusters ("the remedy against cancer/heartattack/stroke...") with a rise of stock-value than to promote the right drug (maybe an old-fashioned one) against the right diseases. Policy of the pharmaceutical industry is driven by marketing (promoting Fear, selling Hope in form of drugs) not by science.

What we need is a compulsory registration of scientific studies comparable with the ISBN number of books. Patients who take part in studies have the right to know what was found out from these studies. We need a labelling of new drugs (blue triangle). This gives doctors and patients the message "take care of unknown effects and side effects" improving pharmacovigilance. We need independent, relevant and understandable informations ("Reckoning with Risks" Gerd Gigerenzer, book of the year 2006) about benefits and harms of drugs by independent institutions.

All in all a big chance for the EU either to gain respect or to loose it by giving responsibility in a very sensitive field to institutions that are not committed to public health but to profit..

Best regards

Günther Jonitz

Dr. med. Günther Jonitz  
Ärztekammer Berlin  
Präsident  
Friedrichstr. 16  
10969 Berlin  
030-40806-5000, Fax -4099  
g.jonitz@aekb.de  
www.aerztekkammer-berlin.de