

ISSUE FACT SHEET

Patient & Consumer Organisations at the European Medicines Agency: Financial disclosure & transparency



Overview

Patient and consumer organisations are increasingly involved as stakeholders and experts in management and scientific committees at the European Medicines Agency (EMA). As with all experts working with the Agency, civil society groups are asked to disclose their sources of income and the corresponding financial contributions relative to the organisation's operating budget. Complete disclosure is important because it provides a qualitative and quantitative evidence base from which to assess potential conflicts of interest. Any competing interest could influence the decision-making process around medicines regulation and as a result, have an impact on public health.

The survey

HAI Europe surveyed levels of corporate sponsorship between 2006 and 2008 among the patient and consumer organisations eligible to work with the Agency (n=23). The survey looked at how many groups received sponsorship and the levels of sponsorship involved. The study also establishes the organisations' compliance with the EMA's criteria on financial disclosure.

Main findings

Two-thirds of the patient and consumer groups working with the EMA received partial or significant funding from medicines manufacturers and/or industry associations.

Fifteen organisations received between 0.2% and 99% of their annual income from corporate sources, whilst seven organisations were funded entirely from alternative sources. No financial data or revenue sources could be retrieved for one of the 23 organisations.

The average corporate contribution per sponsored organisation continued to rise over the period studied at a rate greater than inflation.

The average donation rose from 185,500 EUR per sponsored organisation in 2006, to 282,090 EUR in 2007, and to 321,230 EUR in 2008. These amounts correspond to 47%, 51% and 57% of the average annual revenue of an organisation, respectively.

Fewer than half of the 23 organisations met the EMA's financial reporting

