

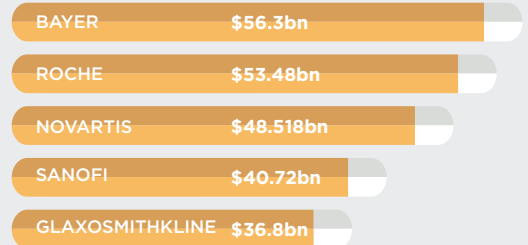
Shedding Light: why we need transparency in healthcare / pharma relationships

1. The pharmaceutical industry

When we are ill we expect our doctor to prescribe the medicine which is best for us. When prescribing drugs, doctors often choose between similar medications made by large, international, drugs manufacturers.

Source: europe.businesschief.com

Biggest pharma companies in Europe by revenue (2016)



2. Promotion or conflict of interest?

Every year pharmaceutical companies spend €millions promoting their products and developing relationships with medical professionals.

Examples of payments to doctors by pharmaceutical companies



Total payments made by pharmaceutical companies to healthcare professionals and organisations by country



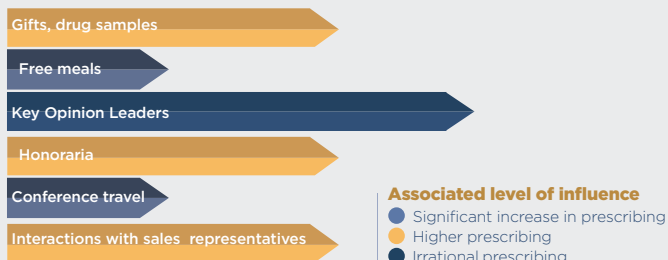
Source: www.civio.es, ABPI, INFARMA, The Guardian

3. Do financial relationships affect prescribing?

Many psychiatrists acknowledge the pressure of promotion by the pharmaceutical industry. There is even evidence to suggest financial relationships encourage overprescribing. One study found doctors receiving free meals as part of pharmaceutical industry promotions were 118% more likely to prescribe the drug being promoted.

Source: Fickweiler F, BMJ Open, 2017), DeJong BA (JAMA, 2016), Lieb K (PlosOne, 2014)

Type of benefit



4. Promoting transparency through sunshine laws

Countries with sunshine laws



The pharmaceutical industry has self-regulated since 2014 through a voluntary code produced by the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industry Associations (it covers 34 countries in Europe). The data it publishes is difficult to access and does not cover all doctors. In Austria in 2015, for example, only 22% of doctors disclosed information about potential conflicts of interest (Source: EFPIA, Ludwig Boltzmann Institute).

To promote transparency some European states have enacted sunshine laws - regulations that oblige doctors and pharmaceutical companies to disclose their financial relationships.

Why implement sunshine laws?

- Improve transparency around drug promotion and pharmaceutical-doctor relationships.
- Dissuade healthcare professionals from entering into inappropriate relationships that could negatively affect clinical practice.
- Greater transparency allows patients to make more informed decisions about their treatment.
- More rational prescribing.

How sunshine laws affect prescribing

Researchers in the US compared Massachusetts, which has a sunshine law, with neighbouring states without sunshine laws. They found doctors in Massachusetts were considerably less likely to prescribe antidepressant and antipsychotic drugs.

Source: University of Michigan, Sinha MS (Am J Bioeth, 2017)

Prescription rates in Massachusetts compared to neighbouring states without Sunshine Law

	Branded	Generic
Antidepressants	54% ▼	45% ▼
Antipsychotics	41% ▼	40% ▼