

Press Release
June 21st, 2017

Transparency Code: The second year

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- For the second time, research-based pharmaceutical companies publish their financial contributions to physicians as part of the Transparency Code.
- The Transparency Code shows that many physicians in Germany participate in strong medical research.
- Only the collaboration of pharmaceutical companies and physicians facilitates medical progress for the patients' benefit.

Berlin (vfa/FSA). June 2017 marked the second time research-based pharmaceutical companies published their financial contributions to physicians, health care professionals and medical institutions.

"We need the knowledge transfer between research and practice for the development of new pharmaceuticals, said Birgit Fischer, director-general of the vfa. "Based on our openness and transparency, we provide insight into the collaboration of pharmaceutical companies and physicians. We are building on what we accomplished in 2016 and will continue this effort in the future."

According to estimates by the German Association of Research-based Pharmaceutical Companies (vfa) and the Voluntary Self-Regulation for the Pharmaceutical Industry (FSA), the financial contributions of pharmaceutical companies to physicians, health care professionals and medical institutions were about EUR 562 million for 2016. This sum was divided as follows:

- About EUR 356 million for collaborations in research;
- About EUR 105 million for education and lectures; and

- About EUR 101 million for supporting events and institutions.

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(as of June 20, 2017).

“As part of the first round of publishing last year, we have seen that there is definitely a willingness to talk about money in the health care system,” Fischer continued. “We need this willingness in order to conduct a factual discussion on what good research and education for the patients’ benefit cost and how they should be funded.”

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“In many areas, the current societal discussion underscores the indisputable value of transparency: When facts can be directly verified by the public, it does not depend on the interpretation by others,” said Dr. Holger Diener, managing director of the Voluntary Self-Regulation for the Pharmaceutical Industry. “At the same time, transparency also means responsibility for all parties involved. Based on the Transparency Code and for the benefit of patients, the pharmaceutical companies will continue to assume this responsibility in the future.”

The FSA makes it easier to identify publications by the individual companies through a list of links (in German): www.pharmatransparenz.de/fachkreisangehoerige/veroeffentlichungen/

Background: What is the FSA Transparency Code?

The pharmaceutical companies in the Transparency Code undertake to disclose all financial contributions to physicians, health care professionals and medical organizations and institutions once a year. These figures are published online for the previous year at the end of the second quarter each year on the corporate websites in question.

The Code distinguishes the following categories:

- Contributions to physicians, other health care professionals, medical organizations and institutions for the implementation of clinical trials and observational studies as part of research and development;
- Contributions to physicians and other health care professionals for speakers’ honorariums and training seminars;
- Contributions to medical organizations and institutions to support events, donations and foundations.

Of course, physicians have the right to decide for themselves whether directly received contributions should be published by name. If this consent is not given, the companies will publish the figures in aggregate form. In the area of research, contributions are published in aggregate form in principle for competitive reasons.

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What is the FSA?

The 54 member companies of the organization "Voluntary Self-Regulation for the Pharmaceutical Industry" (FSA) and the German Association of Research-based Pharmaceutical Companies first implemented the Transparency Code in 2016. Together, they cover about 75% of the German pharmaceutical market.

The FSA was established in 2004 by the vfa member companies as an independent organization and, with the help of the organization's arbitration board, monitors the correct collaboration of pharmaceutical companies with physicians and other health care professionals. Any individual can report a suspected code violation by a pharmaceutical company to the FSA. The independent arbitration board of the FSA investigates all suspected cases reported. If the suspicion is confirmed, the rules of the FSA provide clearly defined sanctions, e.g. fines of up to EUR 400,000 and a mention of the company in question together with the publication of the decision on the internet.

Info graphic:

www.vfa.de/presse-transparenzkodex-2017

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The vfa is the trade association of the research-based pharmaceutical companies in Germany. It represents the interests of 43 globally leading pharmaceutical companies and their more than 100 subsidiaries and affiliated companies in the areas of health, research

and economic policy. The vfa member companies make up about two-thirds of the German pharmaceutical market and employ approximately 76,000 people in Germany. More than 16,000 are engaged in research and development. Follow us on Twitter: www.twitter.com/vfapharma

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