

Editorial

It is time to wake up!!

Barun Nayak¹

¹Department of Ophthalmology, Hinduja Hospital, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India.

The gazette notification of 3 August 2023 by the National Medical Commission was a huge shocker for the Registered Medical Practitioners (RMPs).^[1] The two cardinal issues in this notification that were of major concern and left the RMPs aghast were, writing prescriptions for only generic medicines and the restrictions on the relationship of RMPs with the pharmaceutical companies.

We, as medical practitioners, have always maintained a balance between the cost and the outcome of treatment. However, the general perception, and rightly so, is that the quality control of generic drugs is not of high standard. This is due to lesser regulatory requirements for getting approval, on them, as compared to their branded counterparts. It was a paradox that authorities, on the one hand, had given permission to market the branded drugs but had simultaneously put restrictions on medical practitioners on prescribing the branded drugs. And to top it all the fact, these drugs could not be dispensed without a legitimate prescription. While the intention behind the notification cannot be questioned, there are no two ways about the fact that it came to be viewed as an ill-designed and hurriedly published document wherein the main problem was not considered in totality.^[2]

The relationship of RMPs with pharmaceutical companies is vital. Medical Conferences are of utmost importance. They give us an opportunity to update ourselves on new developments in medical science, which are pertinent for us being well informed while treating patients with the latest developments and technology. Conferences are also viewed as a potential chance to earn continuing medical education/continuing professional development credit points, which are mandatory for the renewal of Medical Council Registration at regular intervals. While conferences provide an opportunity to interact with each other, they also provide a ground for RMPs to interact with Pharma Companies and understand their new products/instruments which are exhibited in the Trade Section of the Conferences. To summarize, it can be said that Medical Conferences are beneficial to both parties.

While RMPs contribute toward the funding of the Conference by way of Registration Charges, the Pharma companies share the burden by taking up sponsorships or renting out space in the Trade Exhibition. We will all have to agree that the new notification has ended up disturbing this symbiosis, leading to the occurrence of medical conferences.

While the soup bubbles away, the media is ready with its spice box to add to it, creating more confusion and distortion of the problem at hand. Although we have witnessed the traits of the media a million times, we have seen in this particular instance that catchy but false headings published in the print media led to many hurried decisions and unnecessary mental stress to the organizers of the conferences.

Although the notification of 3 August 2023 has been kept in abeyance through a separate gazette notification of 24 August 2023, the threat is not over yet.^[3,4] My recommendation as an RMP who has headed more than five large medical associations/societies and has conducted more than 10–15 conferences, would be to aim toward keeping the conferences strictly for scientific activities, and other extravagant celebrations should be curtailed.

Last but not least, with a heavy heart; we have to acknowledge that a big part of our fraternity does accept personal favours from the pharma sector. It is easy to fall prey to the lure of the personal benefits offered. However, we as RMPs, and more educated and responsible professionals, should turn them down. Doing so will ensure that the sanctity of our medical conferences remain intact. If we do not fall in line and impose discipline on ourselves, the authorities will have no option but to come back with stricter guidelines. It is time to wake up and change ourselves.

REFERENCES

1. R-12013/01/2022/ethics. Available from: <https://www.nmc.org.in/mcires/open/getdocument?path=/documents/public/portal/latestnews/nmc%20rmp%20conduct%20regulations%202023>.

*Corresponding author: Barun Nayak, Department of Ophthalmology, Hinduja Hospital, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India. editor@gjcsro.com

Received: 06 September 2023; Accepted: 06 September 2023; Published: 13 September 2023; DOI: 10.25259/GJCSRO_25_2023

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial-Share Alike 4.0 License, which allows others to remix, transform, and build upon the work non-commercially, as long as the author is credited and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms. ©2023 Published by Scientific Scholar on behalf of Global Journal of Cataract Surgery and Research in Ophthalmology

- pdf [Last accessed on 2023 Sep 02].
2. Times of India. Available from: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/nmc-bars-docs-from-meets-sponsored-by-pharmacos/articleshow/102881518.cms> [Last accessed on 2023 Sep 02].
 3. Available from: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/nmc-puts-on-hold-its-regulations-mandating-doctors-to-prescribe-generic-drugs-bar-them-from-endorsing-any-drug-brand/articleshow/103033647.cms?from=mdr> [Last accessed on 2023 Sep 02].
 4. Available from: <https://egazette.gov.in/writereaddata/2023/248314.pdf> [Last accessed on 2023 Sep 02].

How to cite this article: Nayak B. It is time to wake up!! Glob J Cataract Surg Res Ophthalmol 2023;2:15-6.