

The future of continuing medical education: the roles of medical professional societies and the health care industry: Position paper prepared with contributions from the European Society of Cardiology Committees for Advocacy, Education and Industry Relations, Endorsed by the Board of the European Society of Cardiology

European Heart Journal, Volume 40, Issue 21, 1 June 2019, Pages 1720–1727

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ESC Board

Abstract

In recent years, wide ranging biomedical innovation has provided powerful new approaches for prevention, diagnosis and management of diseases. In order to translate such innovation into effective practice, physicians must frequently update their knowledge base and skills through continuing medical education and training. Medical Professional Societies, run as not-for-profit organizations led by peers, are uniquely placed to deliver balanced, disease oriented and patient centred education. The medical industry has a major role in the development of new, improved technology, devices and medication. In fact, the best innovations have been achieved through collaboration with scientists, clinical academics and practicing physicians. Industry has for many years been committed to ensure the optimal and safe application of its products by providing unrestricted support of medical education developed and delivered by international and national learned societies. Recently adopted Codes of Practice for the Pharmaceutical and Device industry were intended to enhance public trust in the relationship between biomedical industry and physicians. Unexpectedly, changes resulting from adoption of the Codes have limited the opportunity for unconditional industry support of balanced medical education in favour of a more direct involvement of industry in informing physicians about their products. We describe the need for continuing medical education in Cardiovascular Medicine in Europe, interaction between the medical profession and medical industry, and propose measures to safeguard the provision of high quality, balanced medical education.

Keywords:

Medical education, Training in cardiovascular medicine, Continuing professional development, Professional societies, Health care industry, Conflict of interest