

Conflicts of Interest case study: Dr Li and Banners Drug Ltd.

Note: While this scenario focusses on a doctor, it could also apply to a range of healthcare professionals who may have a relationship with the pharmaceutical industry. The suggestions offered are examples, and are not an exhaustive list of all the possible solutions or courses of action.

The Scenario: Dr Li's invite to an advisory board meeting

Dr Li is a consultant nephrologist. He's been invited to participate in an advisory board meeting by a large pharmaceutical company, Banners Drug Ltd. He's been told they're looking for expert advice on how the company could support patients and carers to learn how to take a new medicine which affects the kidneys. The invite said that Dr Li would be paid for his participation.

What did Dr Li consider?

Dr Li knew he must always put the interests of his patients before his own. He didn't plan to alter his choice of treatment for his patients as a result of advising the company. However he wondered whether attending the meeting would somehow be seen as influencing his professional judgement. He didn't think his attendance would be a conflict of interest, but realised that his patients and colleagues may perceive it as one.

What did Dr Li do?

Dr Li attended the advisory board meeting as he was keen to support patients to learn how to take the new medicine correctly. Before attending, he shared his concerns with his employer, and declared details of the arrangement in line with their policy on conflicts of interest. He also, following advice in the NHS guidelines on Handling Conflicts of Interest, declared his involvement with Banners Drug Ltd. on the ABPI's Disclosure UK database.

Other useful resources for you

- Joint statement from the Chief Executives of statutory regulators of healthcare professionals
- GMC, *Financial and commercial arrangements and conflicts of interest*, 2013
- NHS England, *Managing Conflicts of Interest in the NHS Guidance for staff and organisations*, 2017
- [Disclosure UK](#) – a database that shows payments and benefits in kind made to doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other healthcare professionals for collaborations with pharmaceutical companies