Conflicts of Interest in Partnership with Baby Food/Feeding Bottle Industries: Is it harmful?

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Overview

- Definition of Conflict of Interest
- History and why we are talking about it?
- How it happens: examples
- How can it be harmful and to whom?
- What can you do?

Noble Laureate Joseph Stiglitz, 2007

 Defines Governance: “How decisions are made in whose interest”
In: Making Globalization Work

Peoples’ perceptions concerning financial CoI
"A conflict of interest is a set of circumstances that creates a risk that professional judgment or actions regarding a primary interest will be unduly influenced by a secondary interest".

Institutional COI (IOM)

- "Institutional conflicts of interest arise when an institution's own financial interests or those of its senior officials pose the risk of exerting an undue influence on decisions involving the institution's primary interests". E.g. institutions seek and receive gifts or grants from companies, for example, the gift of an endowed university chair or a grant for a professional society to develop clinical practice guidelines….

Definition as used in the law

"A conflict of interest exists where an individual has an obligation to serve a party or perform a role and the individual has either:
1) incentives or
2) conflicting loyalties, which encourage the individual to act in ways that breach his or her obligations."

1981: World Health Assembly adopts the Code

- World Health Assembly 49.15 of 1996 to avoid conflicts of interests in implementing the resolutions.
- 2005: “to ensure that financial support and other incentives for programmes and health professionals working in infant and young child health do not create conflict of interest”
- Government of India: “Commercial enterprises by definition are profit driven entities. It is neither appropriate nor realistic for the WHO to expect that commercial groups will work along with governments and other groups to protect, promote and support breastfeeding.”

India enacted a Law in 1992

- It came into force on 1-8-1993 as a central government law by notification in the official gazette to protect, promote & support breastfeeding
- It was strengthened by an Amendment in 2003, enhancing the protection level
- Rules prescribed in 1993 and amended in 2003
- Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Amended act in 2000, which banned all advertisement and promotion of IMS, FB or IF on Television
- BPNI Gazetted as NGOs to monitor its implementation

Resolutions and Government of India position

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Statement of Objects and Reasons

- “...Promotion of infant milk substitutes and related products like feeding bottles and teats do constitute a health hazard. Promotion of infant milk substitute and related products has been more pervasive and extensive than the dissemination of information concerning the advantages of mother’s milk and breastfeeding and contributes to decline in breastfeeding...”
What does IMS Act say?

Section 8
Bans Promotions and Displays in Hospitals, Clinics, Chemist Shops etc.

Section 9 - Prohibits contribution and pecuniary benefits to healthcare workers and their Associations

Restricting baby milk sales

Source: Euromonitor International India Passport report of Baby Foods 2016
The Cost of not breastfeeding: global results from a new tool

How it happens?

Examples

Skewed Results in research
For babies suffering from Inborn Errors of Metabolism (IEMs), 4 MNCs selling baby foods pitched in “Foods for special medical purposes (FSMP)” for babies suffering from Inborn Errors of Metabolism (IEMs). They asked for import licenses and asked for exemption from the IMS Act. They used emotional appeals and joined hands with parents groups.
Sparked Sponsorships of Neonatal Conferences by Foes, DANONE and ABBOT

Contd..

Times of India March 2018

Sunday Guardian March 2018
Partnership had to be dissolved

Nestle Funds Research Studies

Recent Action by ICMR on Research sponsored by Nestle

sponsoring conferences
Reaching to Association of doctors through Webinars

This webcast is brought to you under DIAP, an initiative of IAP to facilitate e-learning in all spheres of pediatrics. Live webcast of the webinar discussions, on-line clinics and their subsequent archiving is one of the activities under this banner.

Dr. Neelam Mohan

Sponsoring conference of Indian Dietetic Association

ABBOTT’s association with doctors

Contacting mothers
Selling bottles on discount!

DANONE sponsors FOGSI Webinar

New player in the field and NNF

How can it be harmful and to whom?
It leads to unnecessary use of formula
- World Bank study in UP
- Several other observations across India
- Powdered infant formula has its own harmful impact both in short and long term

conflicts of interest Silences ....

Food Industry Playbook
- They lobby.
- frame the debate,
- fund research studies,
- partner with scientists,
- create front groups

Impacts policy development FSSAI Sitting on a policy of labelling high sugar foods
What can you do?

Its Your turn now ...

- Respect Conflicts of Interest resolutions of the World Health Assembly and Understand Conflicts of Interest
- Refuse to accept any kind of direct or indirect sponsorship from baby food or feeding bottle companies or even drugs
- Conduct awareness of your members
- Take disciplinary action against the members if they flout the provisions of the IMS Act.

Know This......so simple ! Thank you !!

"Dear Health Authority Officials, Health Professionals, Academies & Scientists,

Know this:
All your legitimacy, credibility, and your professional reputation is gone, as soon as you take money from bottle formula industry.

It's that simple:
There is no debate.

Yours truly,
Dr. Madalena Woollery"
Thank You