

Working with pharmaceutical companies: Prostate Cancer Research's principles and conditions

Date 12.09.21

To be reviewed by the board on 04.10.21

Introduction

As a charity we are aware of how much support from pharmaceuticals can and will make an important contribution to our work on behalf of people affected by prostate cancer. We recognise the importance of working collaboratively with all stakeholders to ensure a holistic understanding and approach to the needs of men living with and after prostate cancer.

However, the views of the charity are always reached independently and are based on informed and balanced evidence, with the aim of improving the lives of people affected by the disease.

We seek to uphold our reputation for integrity, independence, impartiality, and transparency in all we do.

Therefore, whilst we acknowledge that support from companies from these sectors is an important resource, we recognise that a policy to govern relationships with these industries is necessary.

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidance about how we work with companies in these sectors, in the best interests of people affected by prostate cancer. This policy will safeguard the reputations of both the charity and the companies concerned and enable all parties to work together collaboratively to the overall benefit of men with prostate cancer.

Overview

We believe it is important to maintain co-operative relationships with companies that manufacture and market drugs, treatments and medical devices for prostate cancer and offer private screening or healthcare services, but at the same time these companies must not influence our strategic direction, activities or what we say.

Our grant selection process and our processes for monitoring and evaluating research projects are driven by relevance to patients and scientific excellence, as judged against our Research Strategy, and will always remain completely independent of any third party.

In situations where the charity is receiving support from these industries, we, where possible, won't limit support to a single company to prevent accusations of undue influence of our policies. In situations where the charity is receiving support from these industries, we will not give any one organisation exclusivity in its support for each project and service development. This is in line with Clause 27.4 of the ABPI Code of Practice for pharmaceutical companies.

Guiding principles

PCR's policy for working with the medicine, device, diagnostics and private healthcare industries is based upon the following core principles:

1. Clarity of Purpose
2. Independence
3. Integrity

4. Transparency

The policy takes into account the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) Code of Practice for the Pharmaceutical Industry 2016 and the Association of Medical Research Charities' (AMRC) publication, "An Essential Partnership Principles & Guidelines for Working with Industry" 2014. It is supported by a wider Corporate Partnerships Policy and the Charity Commission guidelines 'Fundraising through Partnerships with Companies'.

1. Clarity of purpose: PCR will be clear about the reason for and the planned outcome of any collaboration with a pharmaceutical company, including the ultimate benefit for those affected by prostate cancer, as well as supporters. Collaboration can take many forms, ranging from donations to working together to the sharing of advice and expertise.
2. Integrity: PCR will act with honesty and integrity at all times. We will also consider the integrity of pharmaceutical companies with whom it develops relationships. PCR will not enter into, or remain in, any collaboration that puts its integrity at risk.
3. Independence: PCR will always maintain its independence. We will remain free to comment at will and comprehensively, both positively and negatively, about pharmaceutical companies and their products as and when it becomes necessary or we are invited to comment. This also includes maintaining our own editorial independence.
4. Transparency: PCR will be open about any collaboration and be able to account publicly for the associated activities and any exchanges of funding with, and from, pharmaceutical companies.

Conditions

Taking into consideration the core principles which PCR will follow, we will only work with pharmaceutical companies where:

- The activity being supported meets our strategic aims;
- The funder passes our ethical background and due diligence checks;
- The activity meets the criteria and conditions outlined in this policy and/or has been approved in advance in accordance with our internal appraisal processes;
- The relationship/activity is not subject to any conditions that are unacceptable or conditions that prevent us from acting in the best interests of people with or affected by Prostate cancer;
- We enter into written agreements with pharmaceutical companies with whom we work which document the agreed terms and conditions;
- We can ensure compliance with the conditions of the ABPI Code of Practice for the Pharmaceutical Industry. Where a company is not a member of the ABPI we will require written assurances that any partnership work or support will be conducted to the ABPI Code of Practice, with particular reference to the conditions that are the PCR priorities for the activity;
- The amount of financial support from pharmaceutical companies will not put the organisation at risk or reduce our independence to make research decisions in the best interest of patients.
- There is no attempt on the part of the company or companies to influence the charity's strategy, projects or activities either explicitly or implicitly.
- Ensure that we work with a variety of pharmaceutical companies.
- We review this policy and its operational impact regularly and at least annually.