**The European Society for Paediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition in recent years**

 **Supplementary material 1: Code of Conduct**

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**The Code of Conduct of the European Society for Paediatric Gastroenteroloy, Hepatology and Nutrition (ESPGHAN)**

International congresses, symposia and educational schools organised by ESPGHAN are important and highly visible scientific meetings where up-to-date scientific data are presented and discussed by specialists from many countries. They also create the opportunity for commercial companies involved in paediatric health care to interrelate face-to-face with doctors and allied health professionals. Relationships between medicine and commerce (such as pharmaceutical, nutritional, biotechnology, and medical device companies) have driven innovation in patient care, contributed to the economic well-being of the community, and provided significant resources (financial and otherwise) for professional education, to the ultimate benefit of patients and the public. However, the interests and obligations of medicine and commerce can diverge. An increasingly urgent challenge for both partners is to devise ways to preserve strong, productive collaborations for the benefit of patients and the public at the same time they each take clear, effective action to avoid relationships that could undermine public good and public trust.

Therefore, ESPGHAN established a code of conduct that examines financial relationships between medicine and commercial companies. It summarizes the ethical foundations of ESPGHAN’s obligation to ensure that paediatricians and allied health care professionals acquire and maintain knowledge, skills, and values that are central to paediatrics and child health without undue bias based on commercial interests. The ESPGHAN Code of Conduct analyses the ethical challenges that can be posed when ESPGHAN members who organize, teach, or serve other roles in medical education have financial relationships with companies that have a direct interest in recommendations and illustrates strategies for mitigating the potential of such financial relationships to influence professional education in undesired ways. The Code of Conduct was developed and discussed by members of the ESPGHAN council, following in depth discussion at the ESPGHAN strategy day. The draft was then shared with all ESPGHAN members who were invited to submit comments and suggestions. After the membership expressed general agreement, the Code of Conduct was finalized and adopted by the ESPGHAN Council.

The ESPGHAN Code of Conduct governs the relationship between ESPGHAN and involved industry representatives in the preparation of, during and after events, that are related to research and educational activities as well as position papers in the field of paediatric gastroenterology, hepatology or nutrition. Besides a theoretical document with the identification of the principals of transparency, independence and accountability, this Code of Conduct provides a practical approach how to maintain the independence and integrity of ESPGHAN’s related professional education while promoting a trustworthy relationship between ESPGHAN and commercial companies.

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

1. Relationships between medicine and commercial companies (such as pharmaceutical, medical device, biotechnological and nutritional and dietetic companies) may help to drive innovation in patient care.

2. In an environment of rapidly changing information and emerging technology, paediatricians and allied health care workers must maintain the knowledge, skills, and values central to a healing profession. ESPGHAN must protect the independence and commitment to fidelity and service that define the profession.

3. Financial or in-kind support from pharmaceutical, nutritional, biotechnology or medical device companies that have a direct interest in physicians’ recommendations creates conditions in which external interests could influence the availability and/or content of educational activities. Financial relationships between such sources and ESPGHAN or individual physicians who organize, teach in or have other roles in ESPGHAN activities can carry similar potential to influence these activities in undesired ways.

4. Educational activities that receive funding from sources that have no financial interests in physicians’ recommendations promotes confidence in the independence and integrity of ESPGHAN, as do educational activities in which organizers, teachers, and others involved in educating physicians do not have financial relationships with commercial companies that could influence their participation. Where possible, educational activities should be provided without such support or the participation of individuals who have financial interests in the educational subject matter.

5. Sometimes, support from commercial companies or participation by individuals who have financial interests in the subject matter may be needed to enable access to appropriate, high quality educational activities. In these circumstances, physician-learners should be confident that vigorous efforts will be made to maintain the independence and integrity of educational activities.

6. ESPGHAN and individual paediatricians and allied health care workers must ensure that ESPGHAN defines the goals of physician education, determines educational needs independent from other interests and sets its own priorities for educational activities. Physicians who attend educational activities should expect that, in addition to complying with all applicable professional standards for accreditation and certification as listed earlier in this document, their colleagues who organize, teach, or have other roles in educational activities will:

- be transparent about financial relationships that could potentially influence educational activities.

- provide the information physician-learners need to make critical judgements about an educational activity, including:

- the source(s) and nature of commercial support for the educational activity; and/or

- the source(s) and nature of any individual financial relationships with commercial companies related to the subject matter of the educational activity; and

- what steps have been taken to mitigate the potential influence of financial relationships.

- protect the independence of educational activities by:

- ensuring independent, prospective assessment of educational needs and priorities;

- adhering to a transparent process for prospectively determining when commercial support is needed;

- giving preference in selecting faculty or content developers to similarly qualified experts who do not have financial interests in the educational subject matter;

- ensuring a transparent process for making decisions about participation by physicians who may have a financial interest in the educational subject matter;

- permitting individuals who have a substantial financial interest in the educational subject matter to participate in educational activity only when their participation is central to the success of the educational activity; the activity meets a demonstrated need in the professional community; and the source, nature, and magnitude of the individual’s specific financial interest is disclosed; and

- taking steps to mitigate potential influence commensurate with the nature of the financial interest(s) at issue, such as prospective peer review

7. Position papers and other recommendations on preventive, diagnostic or therapeutic issues or the daily management of patients made on behalf of ESPGHAN should be completely free of interference in any kind by commercial companies.

**Educational activities by ESPGHAN**

The practice of paediatrics and allied health care professionals is a “covenant of trust” between patient, parents and the professional. The respect and autonomy that paediatrics enjoys rest on the profession’s commitment to fidelity and service in the patient-parent-physician relationship. To sustain that commitment, we must ensure that paediatricians and allied health care professionals acquire and maintain the knowledge, skills and values that are central to paediatrics. In return, society grants paediatrics considerable authority to set the ethical and professional standards of practice and the autonomy to educate ourselves. ESPGHAN is a professional organisation that supports research, exchange and critical discussion of research findings, and provides education in the field of paediatric gastroenterology, hepatology and nutrition through the organisation of scientific annual meetings, summer schools, networking opportunities, and position papers with recommendations on preventive, diagnostic and therapeutic approaches and standards of care on treatment recommendations and networking opportunities.

Individual paediatricians and allied health care professionals have an ethical obligation to dedicate themselves to “continue to study, apply, and advance scientific knowledge” and to “maintain a commitment to medical education.” As professionals, practicing paediatricians and allied health care professionals are expected to commit themselves to post academic education and to maintain their clinical knowledge and skills through education and other professional development activities. That commitment is reflected not only in ethical expectations and standards, but also in requirements for licensure and certification of individuals and institutions.

Paediatricians and allied health care professionals and the patients/parents who rely on them must be confident that treatment recommendations and clinical decisions are well informed and reflect up-to-date knowledge and practice. Educational activities that are pedagogically sound, scientifically grounded, and clinically relevant are essential to ensure that paediatricians and allied health care professionals can provide the high quality of care their patients deserve. To achieve these goals, ESPGHAN has an ethical obligation to ensure that the profession independently sets the agenda and defines the goals of professional’s education; controls what subject matter is taught; determines paediatricians and allied health care professionals’ educational needs; and takes steps to ensure the independence of educational content and of those who teach it.

**Financial relationships with commercial companies in education organised by ESPGHAN**

In the context of education, relationships with commercial companies that may pose challenges for the independence and objectivity of physician education include not only direct commercial support of educational activities, but also financial relationships between commercial companies and individual paediatricians and allied health care professionals involved in education as faculty, content developers, or in other capacities.

Commercial company support helps to meet the costs of educational activities in the face of uncertain funding from other sources and may help make education more accessible, especially for paediatricians and allied health care professionals in resource poor 5

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communities. Commercial company engagement and support can be especially helpful in ensuring affordable education activities when educational activities need high cost, sophisticated, rapidly evolving technology or devices. Along with lower costs, commercial company support may encourage greater participation than would otherwise be the case by providing amenities.

However, there is growing concern within and outside medicine that commercial funding for education could have undesirable effects, including potentially biasing content toward funders’ products or interests, and influencing the overall range of topics covered.

Whether and how financial relationships influence ESPGHAN’s educational activities is an important question. Paediatricians and allied health care professionals are entrusted with the interests of patients. Importantly, where patients’ health and public trust are concerned, the perception of bias, even if mistaken, can be as potentially damaging as the existence of actual bias. Empirical evidence alone is not enough to overcome public scepticism. Even evidence that undesired consequences have not occurred cannot be expected by itself to restore confidence when trust has been compromised.

To maintain productive relationships with commercial companies that benefit patients and to sustain the trust on which the patient-parent-paediatrician relationship and public confidence in the profession depend, ESPGHAN must take steps to safeguard the independence and integrity of educational activities related to the society. Therefore, officers representing ESPGHAN, including the members of the Executive Council and Committee Chairs should not hold positions in boards or communication “institutes” of commercial companies.

**Ensuring the independence and integrity of medical and post graduate education**

As individuals and as a society, paediatricians and ESPGHAN have a responsibility to protect the quality of professional education and the reputation of ESPGHAN. While competing interests cannot be eliminated entirely, prudent judgments can be made about how to minimize potential influence and prevent or reduce undesired consequences.

*Minimizing the opportunity for undue influence*

ESPGHAN should aspire to avoid the potential for undue influence or the chance that confidence in the integrity and independence of their activities could be diminished. Avoiding entirely situations in which there is potential for undue influence has the virtue of ethical clarity and practical simplicity. Educational activities that are free of direct financial relationships with commercial companies that have direct interests in recommendations strongly underscores ESPGHAN’s defining professional commitment to independence and fidelity to patients and professionals. Avoiding such relationships also has the practical advantage of eliminating the efforts that must otherwise be devoted to mitigating influence, efforts that may be particularly challenging for small educational project providers, such as summer schools and young investigators forum.

In their roles as education providers, ESPGHAN as such but also content developers, faculty, paediatricians and allied health care professionals should strive to avoid financial relationships with commercial companies that might influence the content. ESPGHAN should strive for obtaining non-commercial sources of support, should design and conduct educational activities so as to limit costs, and should insist that content developers and faculty members do not have problematic ties with commercial companies to ensure unbiased, high quality educational programmes and their conduct that best meets professionals’ needs and is accessible and affordable for a large number of participants.

Defining the terms of financial relationships likewise can help minimize the potential for undue influence. Asking paediatricians and allied health care professionals who teach in or develop content for an educational activity to refrain from accepting personal compensation (honoraria, consulting fees, etc.) could promote independence.

That said, it is not always feasible, or necessarily desirable, for professional education to disengage completely from commercial companies. In some situations collaboration with a commercial company may be necessary to achieve the goals of a research meeting (e.g. provision of diagnostic methodology) or an educational meeting (e.g. provision of endoscopy equipment), and also financial relationships with commercial companies can be ethically justifiable. If not accepting support from a commercial source or not permitting participation by individuals who have financial interests in the educational subject matter would significantly undermine ESPGHAN’s capacity to ensure that paediatricians and allied health care professionals have access to appropriate, high-quality education, it can be acceptable to permit such support or participation. In these situations, vigorous efforts must be made to ensure that financial support is not linked to any influence on decisions on programme planning and content, and the selection of participants.

*Mitigating Potential Influence*

While there should be a presumption that paediatricians and allied health care professionals who organize, design, develop content, or teach in ESPGHAN’s educational programmes should not have concurrent financial ties to commercial companies that would influence their educational responsibilities or clinical advices, it is important to recognize that not all relationships with commercial companies are equally problematic. A relationship that is only indirectly related to an educational activity, modest in scope, or distant in time is not likely to adversely affect - or be perceived to affect - the activity in question. For example, having conducted sponsored research or accepted a modest honorarium for speaking on behalf of a company would not necessarily create such clear potential for bias as to preclude an individual with the appropriate expertise from developing content or serving as a faculty member for a given educational activity or co-authoring a position paper.

Financial relationships that are direct or substantial, however, have significant potential to undermine confidence in educational activities, even if they do not actually compromise those activities. Examples of a direct or substantial financial interest include ownership or equity interest in a company that has an interest in the educational subject matter or royalties or on-going compensated relationships (e.g., consulting arrangements or service on scientific advisory bodies). Relationships that involve responsibilities on behalf of the funder (such as service on a corporate board of directors) or decision-making authority in financial matters can be similarly problematic. In such situations, ethically strong practice requires that steps be taken to mitigate the possible influence of financial relationships on ESPGHAN activities.

*Principles for sustaining trust*

The goal of mitigation is to promote and enhance confidence in the integrity of continuing professional education. Commitment to transparency, independence, and accountability enables paediatricians and allied health care professionals to achieve that goal, whatever role they may play in ESPGHAN activities. Moreover, being transparent about financial relationships that have the potential to influence educational activities and forthcoming about what steps have been taken to minimize possible influence supports physician-learners in exercising critical judgment individually as “consumers” of educational activities organised or endorsed by ESPGHAN.

*Transparency*

Transparency, i.e. disclosing the existence of a financial relationship, is a necessary first step in mitigating the potential of financial relationships to create bias (or the appearance of bias), but it is not sufficient and may even have untoward effects. Disclosure places the burden on learners themselves to determine how sceptical they should be about possible bias in an educational activity. To the extent that disclosure fosters the impression that the presenter is particularly honest and trustworthy, it can encourage false confidence in the activity. To the extent that the presenter believes disclosing a financial relationship is adequate to mitigate its potential influence, he or she may be less circumspect in ensuring content is free of such influence. While transparency is essential, disclosing financial relationships is necessary but not sufficient to mitigate the potential for influence in the educational activity.

*Independence*

Taking concrete steps to ensure that the ESPGHAN educational activity is independent and objective is equally important. Creating a separation between funders and decisions about educational goals, content, faculty, pedagogical methods and materials, and other substantive dimensions of the educational activities can help protect the independence of professional education. ESPGHAN recommends clearly separating decisions about funding from substantive decisions about educational activities. Support of individual educational activities by multiple, competing funders also helps to diffuse the potential influence of any one funder. Carrying out educational needs assessments prior to seeking or accepting commercial support or identifying faculty can similarly enhance the independence of the planning process and resulting educational programming. Likewise, having prospective peer review of a presentation (review of slides or other forms of communication in advance of the presentation by an objective and independent expert who has the power to require changes prior to the public showing) can help ensure that the presentation is free of commercial bias.

Position papers from the Committees, which serve as guidance for practicing professionals should be made completely independent of any commercial support.

*Accountability*

Physician-learners, patients, the public, and the medical community as a whole should be made confident that ESPGHAN as society and paediatricians and allied health care professionals who organize, design, develop content, or teach in educational activities will uphold principles of transparency and independence. The expectation that paediatricians and allied health care professionals involved in educational activities will hold themselves 8

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accountable to address the potential that financial relationships with commercial companies have to influence professional education is a cornerstone of self-regulation. That responsibility can be greatly enhanced by the efforts of accrediting and certifying bodies, but it cannot be supplanted by them. In particular, ESPGHAN members in educational activities should be able and willing to discuss how the principles of transparency and independence have been applied in the educational activities with which they are involved or over which they have decision-making authority.

*Exceptional Cases*

At times it may be impossible to avoid a financial interest or extraordinarily difficult or even impossible to mitigate its potential impact on an educational activity. For the most part, accepting support from a single company or permitting participation by an individual when there is an irreducible financial interest would create increased risk. However, in certain circumstances, it may be justifiable. Such circumstances include instances when accessible, high-quality educational activities cannot reasonably be carried out without support from sources that have a direct financial interest in physicians’ clinical recommendations. Similarly, in the earliest stage of adoption of a new medical device, technique, or technology the only individuals truly qualified to train paediatricians and allied health care professionals in its use are often those who developed the innovation. These individuals may have the most substantial and direct interests at stake, whether through employment, royalties, equity interests or other direct financial interests in the adoption and dissemination of the new technology. ESPGHAN should be transparent about what considerations led to decide to permit an individual with a problematic financial interest to participate in a particular educational activity to ensure that such decisions are justifiable and persuasive to the professional community at large.

**Promotional activities by commercial companies**

Promotional activities are activities developed by or on behalf of a single commercial entity and under the substantive influence of that entity to provide information on the therapeutic use of a product or service. ESPGHAN should not be connected to these activities.

**Transparency of payments to council and committee members or their institutions.**

Each year, council and committee members of ESPGHAN should disclose the financial support they receive privately and on accounts of their institutions, and the sources. These payments will include honoraria for lectures, consults etcetera and amounts received to perform research projects. Candidates applying for such positions should disclose this information prior to their election process.

**Educational Schools**

Educational schools, such as summer schools, are an important feature of ESPGHAN’s educational activities, usually attended by up to 50 paediatricians, researchers, or allied health care providers.

Educational schools that are independent of funding or in-kind support from sources that have financial interests in the education of health care professionals promote confidence in the independence and integrity of professional education. Likewise it is preferable that organizers, teachers, and others involved in educating physicians do not have a financial relationship with industry which could influence their educational performance. Therefore, ESPGHAN strives to obtain restriction free educational grants whenever possible, and to restrict participation of individuals who could have financial interests in the educational subject matter.

That being said, educational schools are often attended by participants with limited financial resources, such as participants from low or middle income countries, where some financial support is necessary to be able to attend. Thus, not accepting support from a commercial source would significantly undermine the possibility that paediatricians and allied health care professionals have access to appropriate, high-quality education. Therefore it can be acceptable to permit such support or participation provided that vigorous efforts are made to mitigate the potential influence of financial relationships. All such financial support must be provided to ESPGHAN and be supervised by the ESPGHAN treasurer. Support by multiple, competing funders is preferable and should be strived for as it helps to diffuse the potential influence of any one funder. The organizers and faculty of the educational school should be transparent about financial relationships that could potentially influence their lectures and workshops and to provide the sufficient information required to make critical judgements about their educational performance. The organisers should be completely independent from commercial supporters in developing the programme and inviting the faculty, e.g. they should not hold positions in advisory boards or communication “institutes” of supporting companies. The organisers and faculty should be in control of the enrolment of the participants. Faculty should not receive any fee for their teaching activities, nor should the organisers for their efforts

**Other educational activities**

Whereas the ESPGHAN annual meeting and the summer schools are the primary goal of reaching the paediatric community and allied health care workers for educational purposes, other activities including monothematic symposia or ESPGHAN schools in middle or low-income countries (e.g. in Africa, Indonesia, China) are developed and conducted as well. These symposia and schools may face a higher risk of unwanted commercial influence, before, during or after the educational event than the annual meeting or the summer schools, due to less stringent regulations at the location. Thus the challenge for both, ESPGHAN and industry partners, is to devise ways to preserve productive collaborations for the benefit of patients and the public, and in the same time to take clear and effective action to avoid relationships that could undermine public trust.

Support by multiple, competing funders is highly desirable as it helps to diffuse the potential influence of any one funder. All financial support must be provided to ESPGHAN and be supervised by the ESPGHAN treasurer. Every effort should be made to achieve sponsorship from multiple sources where possible. Creating a separation between funders and decisions about educational goals, content, faculty, pedagogical methods and materials, and other substantive dimensions of the educational activities is necessary to protect the independence of the professional education activity.

Having prospective peer review of the presentations (review of slides or other forms of communication in advance of the presentation by an objective and independent expert who has the power to require changes prior to the public showing, e.g. by the organiser and ESPGHAN council members should be obligatory to ensure that the presentation is free of commercial bias.

Exposure to commercial products or commercial banners etc. are not allowed within the conference room(s). Funders are not allowed to hand out free gifts exceeding 20 € in total to the participants, three month before, during or three months after the event. Gifts with a value of not more than 120 € will be allowed for professional or patient education purpose

Faculty should not receive any honorarium for their teaching activities, nor should the organisers for their efforts.

Live (streaming) or delayed broadcasting of lectures can be useful tool to reach paediatricians and allied health care workers in remote areas or to those who do not have the resources to be present at such education activities. Therefore, live broadcasting (streaming) may be allowed, but the same rules apply to the receiver’s surroundings, i.e. no commercial products or banners

**Annual Meeting**

1. Organisation

The overall responsibility for the Annual Congress of ESPGHAN lies with ESPGHAN. Part of the organisational work may be delegated to a third party company (PCO), such as registration and accommodation, abstract handling, sponsoring activities, exhibition, etc. The third party company acts in the name and on behalf of ESPGHAN for all delegated activities. At this time (2014), ESPGHAN has mandated MCI UK Ltd with these activities.

2. Participating Companies

The exhibitor/sponsor company shall inform all subsidiaries, affiliates, third party companies etc. involved on its behalf of the rules and regulations of the “Code of Conduct”. It is the exhibitor’s/sponsor’s responsibility – being the official contracted partner to ESPGHAN – that its subcontractors adhere to all rules and regulations.

ESPGHAN and the Professional Congress Organisation working on behalf of ESPGHAN will communicate exclusively with clearly identified third party companies officially mandated by participating exhibitors and sponsors. Queries received from third party companies (i.e. communication and press agencies) which do not clearly indicate which company they are representing will not be answered.

3. Exhibition

The commercial exhibition is a major forum for the pharmaceutical, nutritional and medical equipment companies to create opportunities for presenting their company and their products to health care professionals and to researchers in related fields. Exhibition stands should therefore create the opportunity for the company to show and display information relevant to both the company and their products as well as other scientific information they may choose. Activities not related to the practice of medicine or biomedical research are deemed inappropriate under this Code of Conduct.

– Assignment of Space

Exhibition space will first be allocated to previous supporters and subsequently to other companies.

– Use of Rented Space & Height Limitation

The use and branding of rented space may not exceed the rented surface. The height limitation as communicated in the Exhibition Technical Manual must be respected both for physical and visual devices (e.g. lasers, gobos, etc.)

– Noise

Exhibitors may not produce noise and/or use amplification of music and/or voice which may be heard outside the space assigned to the exhibitors, or which may interfere with or be felt objectionable to attendees or other exhibitors. The volume level must not exceed 70dB (A) at the boundaries of the stand. The organisers reserve the right to require exhibitors to

discontinue any such activity. Live presentations at the stand are not permitted without prior approval from the organisers.

– Stand Activities

“Meet the expert” sessions or press briefings at the stand are not allowed during the official scientific program. Activities for a maximum of 8 participants during coffee breaks are accepted. A request to hold such sessions must be submitted to the Professional Congress Organisation acting on behalf of ESPGHAN (currently MCI UK Ltd) for approval. Stand activities such as quizzes, contests, etc. can take place throughout the exhibition opening hours with a limitation of 8 simultaneous participants.

– Recording

Taking of pictures, filming and audio-recording in the exhibition halls are not allowed for exhibitors. Exhibitors may take pictures of their own stands but not of the stands of other exhibitors. All filming must be used solely for educational purposes and the copyright will be owned by ESPGHAN unless agreed otherwise in writing. The company should inform in writing the Professional Congress Organisation acting on behalf of ESPGHAN (currently MCI UK Ltd) and ESPGHAN of their intention to film, describing the subject and the purpose of the activity. Filming and audio-recording will only be allowed once written confirmation is received by the applicant from the Professional Congress Organisation acting on behalf of ESPGHAN.

– Give-aways and Printed Material

Give-aways and printed material may only be distributed in the space rented by the exhibitor in the exhibition hall or at Satellite Symposia. No such material may be distributed in any hotel used by ESPGHAN. Printed announcements of sponsored events or other material may only be distributed beyond the exhibitor’s booth space with prior written agreement of by the Professional Congress Organisation acting on behalf of ESPGHAN.

Companies may only offer gifts (maximum value of EUR 20) preferably of educational or scientific value. Gifts with a value of not more than EUR 120 will be allowed for professional or patient education purpose. Textbooks and CDs are acceptable up to this value. Product identification is permitted on give-aways. It is the company’s responsibility to also adhere to any restrictions and/or limitations which may be applicable according to the legislation of the host country of the congress.

Contests, lotteries, raffles are subject to the approval by the Professional Congress Organisation acting on behalf of ESPGHAN.

– Space Integrity / Promotional Activities

Exhibitors are prohibited from publicising, distributing, and canvassing, and/or maintaining any activities, inducements, demonstrations, materials, or displays outside the space assigned to them, unless agreed otherwise in writing ahead of the activity.

– Product Disclaimer

The acceptance of a product or service for exhibition does not in any manner constitute an endorsement by ESPGHAN.

– Exhibitor’s Participation in Sessions

Participants registered as exhibitors will not be permitted to attend scientific sessions at the congress. Exhibitors interested in attending any scientific session must register as regular congress participants.

Exhibitors will receive complimentary exhibitor registrations. The number of complimentary registrations depends on the sponsorship package. ESPGHAN reserves the right to refuse applications of companies not meeting or not having met on previous occasions the standard requirements or expectations. ESPGHAN reserves the rights to curtail or to close exhibits (wholly or partially) that reflect unfavourably on the character and the purpose of the congress.

4. Guidelines on scientific abstracts and their presentations at ESPGHAN meetings

Abstracts submitted to ESPGHAN meetings should focus on scientific findings and must not be abused to promote products or companies. Any financial support by commercial companies and any ties to commercial companies such as employment and honoraria must be transparently disclosed. The use of brand names of commercial products should be avoided, unless the disclosure of brand names is necessary for the understanding of the abstract in which case the brand name should not be used more than once.

Oral and poster presentations should focus on the presentation and discussion of scientific data and not in any way be abused for marketing or advertising purposes. Any financial support by commercial companies any ties to commercial companies such as employment and honoraria must be transparently disclosed. The name of companies linked to the research should be disclosed but no company logos should be used in scientific presentations in order to avoid even the suspicion of undue promotional activities. The use of brand names of commercial products should be avoided, unless the disclosure of brand names is necessary for the understanding of the presentation in which case the brand name should not be used more than once.

5. Satellite Symposia Guidelines

Satellite symposia organised by pharmaceutical, medical device or nutritional companies will have, as their main objective, the communication of scientific material, which will enhance the knowledge of attendees. There will be no material inducement or publication of a reward to attend the symposium. Delegates may be sent special invitations and may be offered reasonable meal or drink serviced but no other reward to participants is allowed for attending a symposium.

Satellite symposia slots will be allocated by the Professional Congress Organisation acting on behalf of ESPGHAN, taking into account previous support to the meeting, a balanced match of programme content, and other considerations that serve to support a successful ESPGHAN annual conference.

The programme of a satellite symposium must be of general scientific content. The satellite symposium programme must be submitted to the organisers in advance of the event.

The chairperson of the satellite symposium should not be employed by or otherwise dependent on the sponsoring company but be a health care professional or academician not

employed by a company related to the symposium. The chairperson has a responsibility to oversee that the messages and conclusions presented during the symposium are based on available scientific data. The sponsor should inform the chairperson(s) of this responsibility. In addition, the holder of a satellite symposium and the chairperson are jointly responsible for adhering to the assigned time slot of the symposium.

All satellite symposia must be held at the congress venue during the official time slots offered by the organisers (see Exhibitor & Sponsor Manual). If any activities of a commercial partner are deemed to be in conflict with this policy or with the aims of the society, these will be assessed and will be treated in due course on a case by case basis.

– Advertising & Promotion of Satellite Symposia during the Congress

Satellite symposia programmes and invitations may only be distributed in the space rented by the exhibitor in the exhibition hall (if applicable) and at the entrance to the auditorium used for the satellite symposium no more than 24 hours before the start of the symposium, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Professional Congress Organisation acting on behalf of ESPGHAN. Designated areas in high-traffic locations at the congress venue may be made available to companies for displaying posters advertising their satellite symposia. The display of posters and visuals advertising satellite symposia during the congress will usually be limited to such designated areas, rented exhibition space, hospitality suites as well as staffed hospitality desks.

– Photos, Filming and Audio Recording of Satellite Symposia

Any such recording is permitted with the following conditions: in a written agreement between the company presenting the symposium and ESPGHAN it should be confirmed that the captured material must be used only for educational purposes. The company responsible for the symposium must inform their speakers and obtain written consent from their speakers directly. The captured material should not be profit making or for commercial purposes or incur additional costs to the organisers of the conference. ESPGHAN will retain the right of use for the captured material.

Any such requests require official permission from ESPGHAN clearly outlining the purpose of the recording.

– Live Broadcasting

Live and/or simultaneous broadcasting of satellite symposia in any way is prohibited.

– Delayed Broadcasting

For sound and image recording of satellite symposia (or parts thereof by any type of media) that are dedicated for presentation to a public or closed audience outside the congress, the company holding the satellite symposium is required to obtain formal acceptance from all speakers in writing and send it to the organisers at the latest 4 weeks before the congress. Satellite symposia must not be broadcasted in any way until the first Monday following the end of the ESPGHAN congress at which the satellite is scheduled. See item 6 for additional guidelines for Internet publication.

Technical arrangements should be made first with the ESPGHAN congress team who will redirect the requests to the preferred audio visual supplier.

6. Press, Media and Publication

Press conferences, briefings of any kind or similar group events organised directly or indirectly by the pharmaceutical company may not be held in the congress centre and not be organised during the official scientific programme hours. All such events with groups larger than 8 participants need the prior approval of the Professional Congress Organisation acting on behalf of ESPGHAN.

The use of the ESPGHAN name, ESPGHAN logo, and the congress logo in any fashion, by any commercial entity, for any purpose is expressly prohibited before, during and after a congress without prior written consent of ESPGHAN. The official congress logo without any modifications may be used on invitations for officially approved satellite symposia (see item 4). It can be requested from the ESPGHAN Secretariat. The organiser is obliged to submit a copy of the draft and of the final version of the invitation to the Professional Congress Organisation acting on behalf of ESPGHAN.

Picture taking, filming and recording of the Scientific Programme or any part of it is not allowed unless approved in writing by the Professional Congress Organisation acting on behalf of ESPGHAN.

Press and media interviews can be arranged on demand through the officially appointed ESPGHAN media agency.

7. Internet Publication of Material

The guidelines for press, media and publications are likewise applicable for the publication of material and information on the Internet. Given that all material presented at the congress is of public interest and not confidential anymore, ESPGHAN expects such publications to be accessible without prior registration to a site even if the registration is free.

8. Social Events

The social programme of a congress is an important part of the event itself. It creates the opportunity for participants from different countries to get together, to network, and to exchange information outside the busy scientific programme of the congress. However, exhibitors/sponsors are reminded that social events must not be arranged during the official scientific programme hours (see event website). Transportation to social events must not depart prior to the end of the official scientific programme. Social events organised by the pharmaceutical or nutritional company according to the "ESPGHAN Code of Conduct” may contain a “Welcome Introduction” not exceeding 15 minutes in total by a maximum of two speakers. This introduction may be referred to in the invitation to the social event as “Introduction to...(subject)” and must not contain any product placement.

9. Legal Issues

Each exhibitor/sponsor is responsible for the material and information they make available at the congress. Exhibitors/sponsors should only present material and information which has been approved by their legal departments and which is in compliance with the legislation of the host country of the congress. To summarise, exhibitors/sponsors should address these

issues and any conflicts arising from such matters directly among themselves as the organisers will never intervene or arbitrate in any way in legal issues.

10. Code of Conduct Enforcement

All companies must comply with the ESPGHAN Code of Conduct and general congress guidelines. Penalties will be applied when violations occur. The procedure for policing and enforcing the violation system is as follows:

– Alleged violations will be reported to the Professional Congress Organisation acting on behalf of ESPGHAN.

– Once the alleged violation has been duly considered by the Professional Congress Organisation acting on behalf of ESPGHAN, a representative of the relevant company will be invited to present the company’s view. The final decision on the applicable penalty will be taken by ESPGHAN.

**Position, opinion and discussion papers**

These papers are an extremely important feature of ESPGHAN and are seen as highly influential documents on which countries and national societies base their guidelines. Funding by commercial companies for the preparation of position papers could have undesirable effects, including potentially biasing content toward funders’ products and influencing the overall range of topics covered. Importantly, where patients’ health and public trust are concerned, the perception of bias, even if mistaken, can be as potentially damaging as the existence of actual bias. Any expenses in the process of developing these position papers should be covered from the ESPGHAN budget. On a case by case basis, ESPGHAN may choose to also accept funding towards meeting such expenses from other non-profit making organisations, e.g. NASPGHAN.

**Awards & Grants**

Prizes are an important feature of ESPGHAN and recognize a person’s achievement within ESPGHAN, or value a person’s scientific achievement within the gastroenterology, hepatology or nutrition field. Prizes may be sponsored by industry, although the process to select the individual to be given the award must be completely devoid of commercial influence. The name of the sponsor can be connected to the prize and be announced as such in several ways (website, programme book, at the annual meeting with signs)

ESPGHAN grants can be sponsored by industry, so long as there is no interference by industry employees on the selection process. These grants can bear the name of the sponsor.

The selection committee that awards the prizes and grants should consist of at least three senior members of ESPGHAN. The procedure to select individuals for prizes and grants should be completely transparent and made available to ESPGHAN members at least three months before the selection starts.