

Database launched outlining payments to healthcare professionals

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The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) today published, for the first time, details of transfers of value – payments or benefits in kind – made to individual doctors, nurses and pharmacists, as well as other health professionals and healthcare organisations in the UK on a publicly accessible database Disclosure UK. The MRC frequently partners with industry and welcomes this new level of transparency.

This new database, available to download on the [ABPI website opens in new window](#), shows [industry](#) investment from 109 pharmaceutical companies in the UK (54 ABPI member companies and 55 non-member companies). It will act as an important resource for use alongside the Lambert agreement [opens in new window](#) - an online tool-kit of standard model contract designed specifically to simplify university-business partnerships and research collaborations which the MRC encourages researchers to use.

The database shows that in 2015, the pharma industry invested a total of £340.3m on working with [health professionals](#) and organisations of which £229.3m (67%) is in research and development activities.

The remaining £111m (33%) of non-research and development activities is grouped into payments and benefits in kind made to healthcare organisations and individual healthcare professionals. Payments and benefits in kind to healthcare organisations include: joint working (£3.3m or 1% of total investment); contribution to the cost of events (£30.3m or 8.9% of total investment) and donations and grants (£30.3m

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Companies invested an estimated average of £1,550 per healthcare professional and around £9,506 per healthcare organisation.

Individual recipients of the above payments and benefits can be searched on the database by a number of criteria including the name of the individual doctor, nurse, pharmacist, healthcare professional or organisation and their professional address.

The database indicates that the average amount of payments and benefits in kind invested per company is around £3.1m. 84% of companies reported total investments of under £5 million and those companies investing more than £5 million report investing on average 71% in research activities.

The MRC has supported partnerships with more than 500 companies, ranging from the large pharmaceutical companies to small and medium sized healthcare companies. To date, collaborative efforts have resulted in the development of 518 products and interventions, with 23 of these currently in wide-scale adoption.

Sharmila Nebrajani, director of external affairs at the MRC said, "Industry is by far the largest funder of medical research in this country (around £4.1 billion a year). Collaborations between scientists and industry are crucial to research and development – for example, it takes on average £8bn and between 10 and 15 years to produce a new drug – that's too big for any one organisation or sector to tackle on its own.

"We actively encourage researchers to partner with industry because it increases the value of our funding, ensures industry has access to high quality science and accelerates the speed at which findings can reach patients. But the possibility of 'funder bias' should always be taken into

account and so it is extremely important that there is proper transparency around how these collaborations operate. We require researchers we fund to be explicit about the source of all funding they receive. The ABPI's database is a very welcome initiative as it will aid scrutiny of the science emerging from these vital partnerships with industry."

Mike Thompson, Chief Executive for the ABPI said: "This is a milestone moment for our industry and for the vital relationships we have with health professionals and organisations across the UK. These relationships matter and help our industry bring the right medicine to the right patient at the right time so we can improve quality of life and in many cases save lives. Getting advice from doctors, nurses and health professionals across the NHS helps us do this – we can't do it alone. We believe it's fair we pay for that expertise and insight, as this is work which health professionals undertake often in addition to their day job in the NHS.

"We're committed to transparency – we believe it's right that the public has the opportunity to see what we invest in our work with doctors, nurses, pharmacists and organisations to ensure life-enhancing medicines are developed for the patients who need them. Today, is the next step in sharing as much of that information as we can."

The publication of this data is now an annual requirement of the ABPI's Code of Practice for the UK Pharmaceutical Industry and is also part of a Europe-wide transparency initiative that has seen 33 countries make public these payments and benefits in kind this year.

Provided by Medical Research Council

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