

Poll amongst IFAPP's national Member Associations

# High Importance of IFAPP's Code of Ethical Conduct

As previously reported in IFAPP World I/2006, IFAPP has recently conducted a poll among IFAPP's national Member Associations on IFAPP services and communication as well as Pharmaceutical Medicine ethics. Out of the then 29 national Member Associations, 18 responded (62%) completing the IFAPP's questionnaire: South Africa, Belgium, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Italy, Korea, Greece, Ireland, Argentina, the Netherlands, Turkey, Australia, the United States, Brazil, Indonesia, Pakistan, Germany and one anonymous country. The results were generated in May 2006. Details regarding the subject communication were summarized in IFAPP World I/2006, July 2006 issue. In this issue the results on ethics in Pharmaceutical Medicine are provided.

The answers to the key question: "Please rank the importance of the current services that IFAPP provides" clearly demonstrate the high importance of the IFAPP's Code of Ethical Conduct relative to other IFAPP services (Figure 1). The Code of Ethical Conduct value is exceeded only by "education, accreditation and training in Pharmaceutical Medicine" and "assistance in establishing courses in pharmaceutical medicine."

On the question: "Does your National Association have a Code of Ethical Conduct?" 35% of respondents answered "yes" and 65% said "no." The "yes" answers were further specified with a share of 44% of the respective national Member Associations using the IFAPP's Code of Ethical Conduct. The remaining respondents

said a national authority like the Society of Chemical Industries, the Association of Pharmaceutical Physicians, the General Medical Council, the Pharmaceutical Industry Association or the Ministry of Health administered their code of ethical conduct.

Of national Member Associations using IFAPP's Code of Ethical Conduct, 78% said this Code is working well. However, there were several comments from poll participants on the question: "Which aspects need to be addressed and changed?"

"All members of the 'British Association of Pharmaceutical Physicians' (BrAPP) expected to abide by the 'General Medical Council's' (GMC) 'Duties of a Doctor'. However, IFAPP's Code mirrors GMC so not an issue for us."

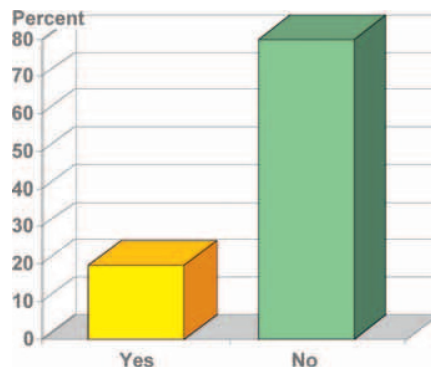
"We are discussing the opportunity to implement the IFAPP Code."

"We are moving to the side of working, but not well. It looks like to have discrepancy between multinational companies and domestic companies. The government is involved in its implementation."

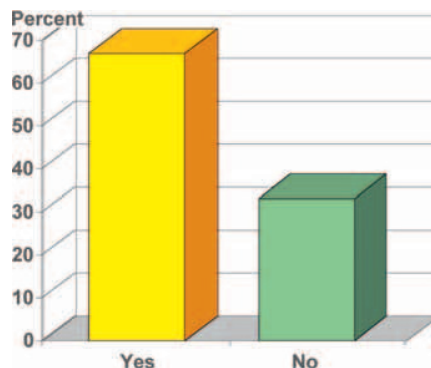
"Charter is sufficient, and oath of Hippocrates."

Almost daily ethics in medicine, and particularly in pharmaceutical medicine, are being questioned and challenged. In this respect, another crucial question of IFAPP's poll was: "Has your National Association faced an ethical dilemma over the last five years?" Just 20% of respondents answered "yes" while 80% said "no" (Figure 2).

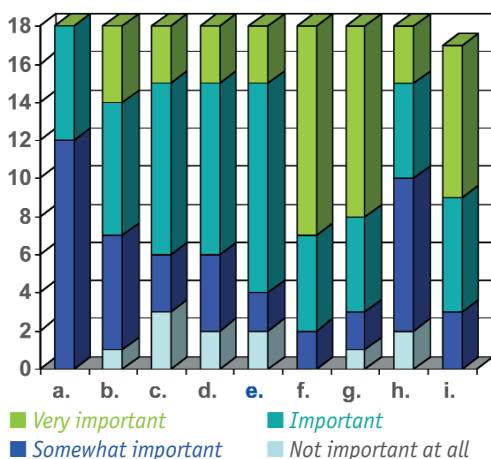
**Figure 2:** Has your National Association faced an ethical dilemma over the last five years?



**Figure 3:** If yes, would you be prepared to share the details in follow-up (what happened, how was it managed, what was the outcome)?



**Figure 1:** Importance of the Code of Ethical Conduct provided as a service by the IFAPP relative to other services – ranking by IFAPP's national Member Associations



- a. pharmaceutical and country news
- b. international conference on Pharmaceutical Medicine
- c. conferences involving EMEA
- d. conferences involving FDA
- e. Code of Ethical Conduct
- f. education, accreditation and training in Pharmaceutical Medicine
- g. assistance in establishing courses in Pharmaceutical Medicine
- h. assistance in establishing member associations
- i. promotion of recognition of Pharmaceutical Medicine as a medical specialty

Roughly two-thirds (67%) of all poll participants stated, they would be prepared to share the details of any ethical dilemma in follow-up with reports on what happened, how was it managed and what was the outcome (Figure 3).

For further details you may like to visit the IFAPP's international "Working Party on Ethics" (WPE) web site ([www.ifapp.org](http://www.ifapp.org) following "ethics" in the menu). Here you will find the WPE conclusion: "Ethics in pharmaceutical medicine is a vast subject. We hope that by working on this Code we may have begun the process of helping the transparent discussion of the issues it raises. We have no absolute answers but hope that the points we raise in the Code will stimulate others to consider in thoughtful depth the points raised." Get involved – you are cordially invited!

Eckhard Boettcher-Buehler

