

BAPM Statement on Sponsorship by Companies Manufacturing Formula Milk.

Respecting mothers' individual choices, BAPM strongly advocates breast feeding and endorses all efforts to improve facilities for lactating mothers in our care.

It is generally accepted that for very preterm infants, breast milk (whether mother's own or donor milk) does not provide sufficient protein, phosphate and calories, and needs to be fortified with specialist breast milk fortifier. Breast milk fortifier is not a breast milk substitute, but it is manufactured by formula milk companies. Optimal nutrition for those preterm infants for whom mother's own breast milk is not available remains under debate, with the case for donor human milk not proven except perhaps in the most extremely preterm babies.

BAPM believes that for professionals engaged in neonatal practice, detailed knowledge of products available to fortify breast milk, and of specialist formulae for preterm babies of those mothers who are unable, or choose not, to breast feed is essential. We also believe that discussion of such products with representatives of formula milk companies would never result in a decision to recommend formula milk of any type over mother's own milk when the latter is safe and available.

In 2017 BAPM developed a Policy for Interaction with Commercial Companies. This policy was developed in line with section 7.2 of the WHO International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes (1981) and followed extensive consultation with our members. Implementation of this policy has meant that BAPM has adopted a strict due diligence procedure to commercial presence at our meetings, allowing promotion only of breast milk fortifier and/or specialist formulae, either for preterm babies or babies with specific metabolic requirements or dietary intolerance.

BAPM notes that a motion was passed at the Annual General Meeting of RCPCH on 14th May stating that "*sponsorship of meetings of health professionals and scientific meetings by companies selling foods for infants and young children should not be allowed*". This motion is in line with recent decisions by RCPCH and the BMJ to ban all commercial interaction with formula milk companies.

While BAPM believes that this motion was not intended to cover breast milk fortifiers (or indeed specialist formulae), it heightens concerns expressed by our members that some health care organisations will not allow their employees to attend BAPM meetings if, despite our due diligence policy, any sponsorship is received from the companies that manufacture these products.

BAPM Executive Committee has therefore reluctantly decided that for the 2019 Annual Conference and Scientific Meeting we will not accept payment for exhibition stalls from any company that manufactures formula milk.

BAPM is in active discussion with RCPCH and we will review our position after seeking feedback from our extended membership as well as delegates at the 2019 joint BAPM and EBNEO Annual Conference and Scientific Meeting in September.

BAPM will continue to advocate for appropriate platforms for scientific interaction between perinatal professionals and companies manufacturing breast milk fortifiers and/or specialist preterm and metabolic formulae, as well as ongoing research into neonatal nutrition, which we strongly believe to be in the interests of the babies for whom we care.

21 May 2019