

Policy on relations with commercial companies

Introduction

The International Society for Affective Disorders exists to promote research and education into affective disorders. Through research ISAD aims to;

- improve the understanding of the conditions amongst professionals and the public
- improve the recognition and treatment of affective disorders leading to better health outcomes
- reduce the public health burden of the disease

The purpose of the commercial relations policy is to provide guidance on how ISAD should work with corporate supporters in the best interests of the charity and its membership. The policy does not provide a definition of how to manage every possible funding opportunity; rather, it provides a set of principles on which decisions can be based.

Policy Statement

1. Relationships with commercial companies

ISAD believes it is important to maintain co-operative relationships with commercial companies, especially those which are involved in the manufacture, research and development of drugs and other treatments, so as to foster communication between our scientific and clinical membership and the commercial sector.

Each party should remember that successful partnerships are those where both partners gain something, and each should make efforts to understand the internal culture of and external pressures on the other.

ISAD recognises that commercial companies have to be profitable but will not be pressured into conforming to a company's marketing agenda if it requires the distortion of scientific data. It is preferable to turn down funding if the alternative is compromising ISAD's independence.

2. Financial Support

ISAD welcomes funding and sponsorship as long as the Society's independence is not compromised in any way. The relationship between the Society and the Sponsor must be totally transparent. A contract between the two parties is desirable and indeed is often required by law.

This funding is only used for scientific purposes, for example it allows the cost of attending meetings for individual participants to be kept substantially lower than could otherwise be expected.

Supporting organisations will usually expect to have a presence at the Society's meetings and this should be allowable under the terms of the support given. The Society will ensure that this presence will not be overbearing or intrusive.

The scientific content of meetings must remain the exclusive responsibility of ISAD. This is of benefit to both the Society and supporting organisations as ISAD's scientific reputation and integrity is what makes it attractive for sponsors. If this credibility were to be undermined it would be detrimental to all concerned. The Society will not embark upon or continue with any relationship which might damage its reputation or independence.

3. Endorsement

ISAD supports the availability of the widest possible range of evidence based treatments for Affective Disorders. However, the Society rejects the irrational manipulation of scientific data for commercial, public relations or political purposes and will therefore not specifically endorse any individual treatment on the basis of the sponsorship of the manufacturer.

4. Sponsorship and Funding

ISAD accepts funding from commercial companies and groups of companies on the following conditions:

- There must be strong grounds for believing it will result in benefit to ISAD and its membership and that it helps the society to pursue its goals.
- ISAD must be satisfied that no adverse publicity will accrue from accepting funds before any agreement is made.
- There must be no attempt on the part of the funder to influence ISAD policy or actions in any way, either explicitly or implicitly.

5. Guidelines for co-operation

When working with ISAD the following guidelines will be followed:

1. A company's support will be acknowledged in an appropriate way following discussions with the company concerned.
2. External communications (from ISAD and/or the supporting organisation) regarding a commercial organisation's support will promote their involvement in a positive and constructive way

3. ISAD should be consulted whenever and wherever its name is used, for both internal and external communications. Approval must be sought for any copy produced which refers to an ISAD initiative or event supported by a commercial organisation.
4. At no time can the charity's logo be used without express written permission for every occasion it is used.
 - The use of the ISAD logo is strictly controlled and shall not be used without ISAD's consent.
 - The use of ISAD's logo has implications of endorsement and companies should be aware that permission for such use would have to be given by the Executive Committee and Trustees of ISAD and a charge would be likely to be made for such use.
5. At no time can press releases be issued which refer to ISAD without the Society's prior approval. Suggested quotes can be prepared but must always be agreed by either the Society's President or the Administrator.
6. ISAD retains a veto over all materials produced in connection with an initiative or event. Adequate approval time needs to be allowed for this. Comment on materials may be made by sponsors during the production of materials.

6. Definitions

Sponsorship is defined as any arrangement where one or more of the following applies:

- The sponsor's logotype can be used in an appropriate way in agreement with ISAD.
- The wording and/or position of the credit is part of the sponsorship negotiations with the company

Grants are defined as arrangements where the following apply:

- There is a one line/sentence credit
- The company's logotype is not used
- ISAD controls the wording and position of the credit

Donations are where there is no obligation on the part of ISAD to acknowledge the support, although we may decide to do so in the Annual Report etc.

Any of the above forms of support maybe given either as money or in kind.

In exceptional cases the President of ISAD may decide to relax a specific policy where this is judged to be in the best interests of the Society. In such cases the President will refer to the Executive Committee as appropriate.