

[Clinical & Experimental Allergy / Early View](#)CORRESPONDENCE | [Full Access](#)

## Response to allergy societies and the formula industry

Graham Roberts , Adam T. Fox, Deb Marriage, Susan Leech

First published: 01 December 2021

<https://doi-org.bibliosan.clas.cineca.it/10.1111/cea.14070>

In 2020, the BSACI's policy on how it interacts with industry<sup>1</sup> was ratified at the annual general meeting by members. This policy enables BSACI to balance the advantages of working in partnership with industry to bring real benefit to patients whilst at the same time ensuring the integrity and independence of the BSACI is not compromised. One of the drivers for this policy was the 2016 WHO guidance on the marketing of breast milk substitutes (WHA resolution 69.9).<sup>2</sup> The BSACI recognizes that the best opportunity to improve the health and well-being of infants and young children is through the promotion of breastfeeding. However, for infants with milk allergy who are unable to breastfeed, specialist milk formulas can be crucial in maintaining their health.

BSACI agrees with the recommendations of WHA Resolution 69.9, which include the stipulation that formula milk companies should not provide any information for health workers other than that which is scientific and factual. One of the principles of the policy is that the BSACI will not have commercial relationships with companies that directly manufacture infant milk formula. This was agreed in spite of the material financial impact (50% reduced sponsorship income) of not accepting sponsorship from the formula milk industry. This ensures the BSACI's independence as an expert voice in the critical area of infant feeding.

We believe it is up to other professional societies, in consultation with their membership, to make their own decisions related to their relationships with industry partners.

In line with our industrial policy, in October, the British Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (BSACI) held a very successful annual meeting without funding from infant milk formula companies. Unlike 2020, this was a real-world, face-to-face meeting in Harrogate, with over 600 participants from the United Kingdom and other countries. This shows how successful that approach can be. Despite the considerable impact on sponsorship income, the society was able to deliver a high-quality meeting whilst maintaining a balanced meeting

budget. We see this as an important achievement, reaffirming the policy decisions made by the BSACI last year.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors are the Trustees of the British Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology.

## REFERENCES



1 British Society for Allergy and Clinical Immunology Industry Interaction Policy. 2020. <https://www.bsaci.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/BSACI-Industry-Interaction-Policy.pdf> . Last Accessed 12th October 2021.  
[Google Scholar](#)

2 World Health Organisation. *Ending Inappropriate Promotion of Foods for Infants and Young Children*. 2016 [https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/WHA69/A69\\_R9-en.pdf?ua=1](https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA69/A69_R9-en.pdf?ua=1) . Last Accessed 12th October 2021.  
[Google Scholar](#)

[Download PDF](#)

About Wiley Online Library

**Privacy Policy**

**Terms of Use**

**Cookies**

**Accessibility**

**Publishing Policies**

Help & Support

**Contact Us**

**Training and Support**

**DMCA & Reporting Piracy**

Opportunities

**Subscription Agents**

**Advertisers & Corporate Partners**

Connect with Wiley

**The Wiley Network**  
**Wiley Press Room**

Copyright © 1999-2022 John Wiley & Sons, Inc. All rights reserved