

Module 8
Conflict of Interest Considerations
Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, appendix 1 and 2
(.3 CEUs)

Learner Outcomes

The participant will be able to:

- a. Interpret the ethical practice guidelines on limits on ethical relationships with manufacturers
- b. Identify the factors that lead the public to question the ethics of professionals
- c. Recognize how gift giving potentially influences clinicians

Learner Assessment tool

Please circle the correct answer

1. For a gift to be acceptable, its value must be less than \$100 and it should be related to professional practice.
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. One reason that there has been increased scrutiny on gifts to health-care professionals is that the Congressional Budget Office sees those marketing expenses as one of the causes of inflation in health care spending.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. Marketing costs of pharmaceuticals is ten times the cost of the development of drugs, and it is estimated that this is also true of amplification development/marketing expenditures.
 - a. True
 - b. False
4. The group Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturer's of America now considers giving any gift to a physician as inappropriate (although modest meals may be provided during a sales visit)
 - a. True
 - b. False
5. Patient concern for professional conflict of interest lowers compliance with the professional recommendations, which harms patients.
 - a. True
 - b. False

6. The principle that influences professionals to increase their dispensing patterns after being given gifts is called:
 - a. Reciprocal giving
 - b. The Golden Rule
 - c. The Norm of Reciprocity
 - d. Gordon's Rule
7. Katz and Merz summarized that being given meals has additional influence because it invokes all but one of these emotions:
 - a. The satisfaction that one does not have to incur the expense oneself; a feeling of thriftiness
 - b. The pleasure of eating
 - c. Flattery – that the sales representative finds you important enough to lunch with
 - d. A feeling of friendship with the sales representative since traditionally meals are shared with family and friends
8. While some patients perceive conflicts of interest in receiving token gifts, and that is sufficient reason to avoid the practice, there is no research from the social sciences that demonstrates that physicians or other health-care providers alter their dispensing patterns.
 - a. True
 - b. False
9. The belief that we, ourselves, are not influenced by gift giving, while considering it likely that other practitioners are influenced by gifts, even in ways they may not realize, is an example of self-serving bias.
 - a. True
 - b. False
10. Disclosure of gift giving is sufficient to mitigate any harmful influences and alleviates patient concern about the influence of those gifts.
 - a. True
 - b. False
11. A survey of patient opinion found that few patients object to audiologists receiving small gifts (pens, pads) from vendors, and that also, receiving loans directly from manufacturers is also generally not something patients find inappropriate.
 - a. True
 - b. False
12. Volume discounts:
 - a. Can be accepted. There are no restrictions on this form of incentive
 - b. Can be accepted only if the practice uses "unbundled" billing, so that the discount can be documented as benefiting the patient
 - c. Can be accepted, as this longstanding business practice has the potential to benefit the patient, but only as long as there is no requirement for a guaranteed sales volume to receive that discount
 - d. Cannot be accepted, as they are a form of conflict of interest

13. A business development plan, wherein the manufacturer retains a portion of the discount and places it in a special account to be used for equipment purchase:
 - a. Is another form of discount and is permitted
 - b. Is not permitted. The patient could question whether the decision on recommendation of that device is related to the desire to obtain specific equipment for the practice
 - c. Remains controvert. The Ethical Practice Board has not taken a position
 - d. Is disallowed by the Academy of Dispensing Audiologists but permitted under the American Academy of Audiology guidelines

14. A manufacturer offers its accounts training on the newest product at its factory and pays for the travel expenses. While it is better if the audiologist would pay for his or her own travel expenses, this is permitted:
 - a. If the audiologist cannot afford to pay his or her own expenses, as may occur for those without CEU travel budgets
 - b. If it is only the lodging and meals that are paid for, rather than airfare expenses
 - c. Can be fully paid and may include modest entertainment, as long as the event earns CEUs
 - d. If the meals and accommodations are modest, and do not include paid social events such as golf outings, provided that the training and the reason for the trip are legitimate and that there are no “strings” attached to accepting the training

15. An audiologist enrolls in an incentive plan with the manufacturer he already does business with. Acceptance of the incentive, a cruise, does not require the audiologist to change his dispensing pattern.
 - a. The incentive plan does not constitute a conflict of interest and can be accepted
 - b. The incentive plan does not constitute a conflict of interest and can be conditionally accepted; it must be terminated if the audiologist no longer believes the product is the best available for his patients
 - c. The incentive plan does not constitute a conflict of interest and can be accepted as long as it is disclosed to all patients
 - d. The incentive plan is not ethically acceptable because the patient could reasonably question whether the hearing instrument is really best or whether the cruise has affected the audiologist’s decision on recommending that amplification system

16. The Academy’s “Ethical Practice Guideline for Relationships with Industry for Audiologists Providing Clinical Care” calls for audiologists to avoid receiving any gift from a vendor, regardless of the value of that gift.
 - a. True
 - b. False

17. The Academy’s “Ethical Practice Guideline for Relationships with Industry for Audiologists Providing Clinical Care” calls for audiologists to refrain from owning a share in a hearing aid company, or actively buying stock in hearing aid companies. Those who are employees of a hearing aid company that includes that corporation’s stock as a compensation should be provided with written and oral disclosure of the conflict of interest to patients
 - a. True
 - b. False

18. Audiologists who are paid consultants for industry should disclose this relationship to their patients in writing.
 - a. True
 - b. False