

ESPGHAN Code of Conduct 2014

Educational Schools

Educational schools, such as summer schools, are an important feature of ESPGHAN's educational activities, usually attended by up to 50 paediatricians, researchers, or allied health care providers.

Educational schools that are independent of funding or in-kind support from sources that have financial interests in the education of health care professionals promote confidence in the independence and integrity of professional education. Likewise it is preferable that organizers, teachers, and others involved in educating physicians do not have a financial relationship with industry which could influence their educational performance. Therefore, ESPGHAN strives to obtain restriction free educational grants whenever possible, and to restrict participation of individuals who could have financial interests in the educational subject matter.

That being said, educational schools are often attended by participants with limited financial resources, such as participants from low or middle income countries, where some financial support is necessary to be able to attend. Thus, not accepting support from a commercial source would significantly undermine the possibility that paediatricians and allied health care professionals have access to appropriate, high-quality education. Therefore it can be acceptable to permit such support or participation provided that vigorous efforts are made to mitigate the potential influence of financial relationships. All such financial support must be provided to ESPGHAN and be supervised by the ESPGHAN treasurer. Support by multiple, competing funders is preferable and should be strived for as it helps to diffuse the potential influence of any one funder. The organizers and faculty of the educational school should be transparent about financial relationships that could potentially influence their lectures and workshops and to provide the sufficient information required to make critical judgements about their educational performance. The organisers should be completely independent from commercial supporters in developing the programme and inviting the faculty, e.g. they should not hold positions in advisory boards or communication "institutes" of supporting companies. The organisers and faculty should be in control of the enrolment of the participants. Faculty should not receive any fee for their teaching activities, nor should the organisers for their efforts

Other educational activities

Whereas the ESPGHAN annual meeting and the summer schools are the primary goal of reaching the paediatric community and allied health care workers for educational purposes, other activities including monothematic symposia or ESPGHAN schools in middle or low-income countries (e.g. in Africa, Indonesia, China) are developed and conducted as well. These symposia and schools may face a higher risk of unwanted commercial influence, before, during or after the educational event than the annual meeting or the summer schools, due to less stringent regulations at the location. Thus the challenge for both, ESPGHAN and industry partners, is to devise ways to preserve productive collaborations for the benefit of patients and the public, and in the same time to take clear and effective action to avoid relationships that could undermine public trust.

Support by multiple, competing funders is highly desirable as it helps to diffuse the potential influence of any one funder. All financial support must be provided to ESPGHAN and be supervised by the ESPGHAN treasurer. Every effort should be made to achieve sponsorship from multiple sources where possible. Creating a separation between funders and decisions about educational goals, content, faculty, pedagogical methods and materials, and other substantive dimensions of the educational activities is necessary to protect the independence of the professional education activity.

Having prospective peer review of the presentations (review of slides or other forms of communication in advance of the presentation by an objective and independent expert who has the power to require changes prior to the public showing, e.g. by the organiser and ESPGHAN council members should be obligatory to ensure that the presentation is free of commercial bias.

Exposure to commercial products or commercial banners etc. are not allowed within the conference room(s). Funders are not allowed to hand out free gifts exceeding 20 € in total to the participants, three month before, during or three months after the event. Gifts with a value of not more than 120 € will be allowed for professional or patient education purpose

Faculty should not receive any honorarium for their teaching activities, nor should the organisers for their efforts.

Live (streaming) or delayed broadcasting of lectures can be useful tool to reach paediatricians and allied health care workers in remote areas or to those who do not have the resources to be present at such education activities. Therefore, live broadcasting (streaming) may be allowed, but the same rules apply to the receiver's surroundings, i.e. no commercial products or banners.