

MAIF Complaint Committee's interpretation of Clause 7(a) of the MAIF Agreement relating to scientific and factual information provided to health care professionals

7(a) Manufacturers and importers of infant formulas providing information about the formulas to health care professionals should restrict the information to scientific and factual matters.

Scientific information about infant formulas that is provided to health care professionals by manufacturers and importers should reflect the totality of the evidence. Manufacturers and importers should continue to take note of the APMAIF Interpretation (February 1993) *"Scientific information should reflect the current scientific knowledge in total, not simply selective parts that can be used in a misleading way"*.

Scientific claims should be supported by a reference to the scientific literature and the cited publication/s should be relevant and have been published in a peer reviewed journal. If this is not possible, the manufacturer should be able to provide the MAIF Complaints Committee, if requested, with supporting evidence and the rationale for supporting the scientific claims with that evidence.

The language used in scientific claims should reflect the quality and strength of the supporting reference(s)/ evidence and have regard to the NHMRC Evidence Hierarchy¹, while noting limitations on randomisation in nutrition studies involving methods of infant feeding.

Such information should not imply or create a belief that the infant formula product is equivalent or superior to breastfeeding.

¹ National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). NHMRC additional levels of evidence and grades for recommendations for developers of guidelines. Commonwealth of Australia, 2009