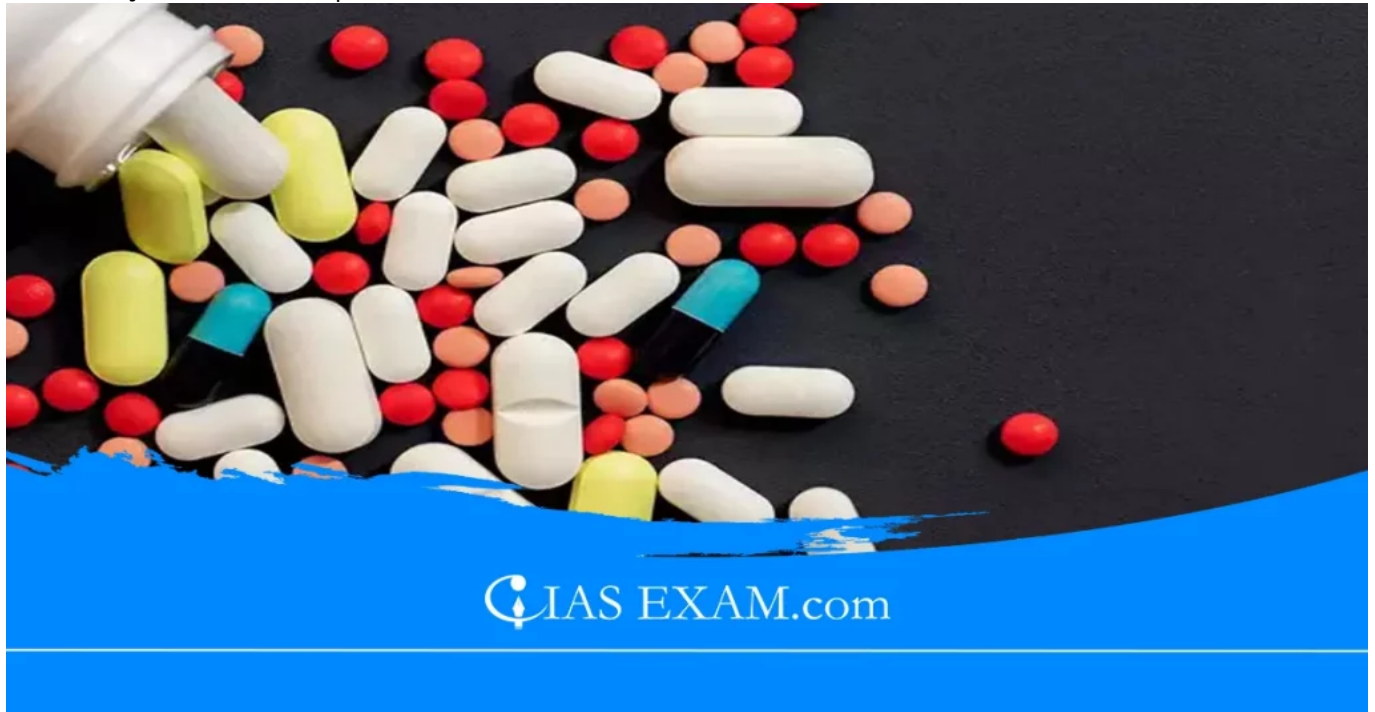


Uniform Code for Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (UCPMP), 2024

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Context

The Department of Pharmaceuticals has introduced the Uniform Code for Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices, which sets out clear guidelines for how pharmaceutical companies should market their products and engage with healthcare professionals.

Key Points of UCPMP 2024

- **Ethical Marketing:** The code mandates that marketing practices must prioritise patient welfare and evidence-based medicine.
- **Transparency with Healthcare Professionals:** There are strict guidelines on interactions with healthcare professionals, ensuring that these relationships do not influence medical decisions.
- **Bans on Gifts and Inducements:** The UCPMP prohibits pharmaceutical companies from offering gifts or financial inducements to healthcare providers to promote their products.
- **Regulation of Promotional Materials:** All promotional materials must be factual, balanced, and not misleading, with clear indications of the drug's correct usage.

Key Guidelines for Responsible Marketing

- **Cautious Use of Terms “Safe” and “New”:** The UCPMP emphasises that ‘safe’ should be not used as a substitute for terms such as ‘without side effects’, ‘without toxic risks’, ‘not addictive’ unless expressly distinguished. More to it, the ‘new’ tag for the drugs in the Indian market is inappropriate if manufactured for more than a year.
- **Restrictions on Medical Representatives:** Medical reps shall not offer or use gawk deals or deceit offerings to have a chance to talk to medical personnel. And last but not least, paying for access is also prohibited.
- **Transparent CME Engagements:** According to the new code, all CME events have to follow transparent and proven standard instructions on the list of acceptable locations, which do not include overseas venues.
- **Prohibition of Monetary Incentives:** Healthcare operators, their agents, and their relatives should not receive any type of money or favour from pharmaceutical entities or their agents.
- **Ban on Gifting:** The UCPMP, therefore, mists out gifting by pharmaceutical companies and their agents.
- **Mandatory Compliance and Circulation:** The code requires that all complied and would be distributed extensively.
- **Marketing in Accordance with Approval Terms:** The advertising of drugs should continue only through the marketing approval language approach, where pre-approval advertising is prohibited.
- **Evidence-Based Drug Claims:** The effectiveness and usefulness of drugs to be proved has to occur through the evaluations of the real life evidence.

Challenges in Implementation

Despite its comprehensive nature, the UCPMP 2024 faces several challenges: Despite its comprehensive nature, the UCPMP 2024 faces several challenges:

- **Self-Regulation:** Being optional, one important question that comes to mind is; its impact depends either wholly or partly on compliance.
- **Ambiguities and Loopholes:** There can be sections of the code which will be confusing to some and will not allow to avoid violation of the rules.
- **Global Variations:** The multinational companies may have difficulties with local firms when their standards of practice are not in line with the global practices.

Conclusion

The UCPMP 2024 is a step forward in establishing ethical marketing practices in the pharmaceutical industry. While it sets a high standard for compliance, its success will depend on consistent enforcement and the willingness of companies to embrace these ethical standards.

Source: [The Hindu](#)

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Q. Analyse the significance of the Uniform Code for Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (UCPMP) 2024 in the context of the Indian pharmaceutical industry and healthcare system. Discuss the potential challenges in its implementation and the impact it might have on ethical practices within the industry.