



Introspective Look at the Medical Information Processes within Partnership Companies

James Lau, Pharm.D., Christine Ghobrial, Pharm.D., Evelyn Hermes-DeSantis, Pharm.D., BCPS
Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey



Background

Partnerships for products are formed between pharmaceutical companies on the belief that this may lead to more efficient work processes and the minimization of business risks.¹ The types of collaborations for pharmaceutical products can vary from a joint venture to a co-promotion, co-marketing, or co-licensing agreement. In a joint venture agreement, both partner companies contribute equities and assets to create a legal partnership to develop and market the collaborative product.² In a co-promotion collaboration two companies manage the sales and marketing of their product, whereas in a co-marketing agreement, both companies collaborate to jointly market the product.^{2,3} Co-licensing partnership agreements allow both companies to negotiate specific terms in the agreement ranging from full development rights for only one company to sharing development and marketing costs for both companies.¹ These types of collaborations can vary from product to product within one individual company. Alignment of medical information (MI) across the different types of partnerships is an essential part of successful partnership work processes.

Objectives

- To examine if there are trends in the type of partnerships formed among pharmaceutical companies.
- To examine if differences or similarities exist in the MI processes of companies that are in a partnership agreement for a product.

Methods

- Twenty-nine partnership products from 22 different pharmaceutical companies were identified in the pharmaceutical market in 4Q06.
 - Products were identified based on research of the pharmaceutical companies and the full prescribing information associated with their products.
- To identify the MI specialists responsible for these products, various individuals within the pharmaceutical industry were contacted via electronic mail (email) or telephone.
- An online survey was distributed by email to 34 out of a possible total of 58 MI specialists from pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies with partnership products.
- These MI specialists were also requested to forward the survey to their MI counterpart from their partner company in the 24 cases when contact information was not available.
- Recipients were asked to respond to the survey within 10 days. Two email reminders were sent during the 10 day period.
- Recipients were informed that participation would be kept in confidence, and no identifiers will be linked to the responses.
- A 13 question survey assessed the various roles and responsibilities in MI departments across a partnership. These questions were formulated to assess:
 - Type of partnership
 - MI roles and responsibilities across the partnership
 - Verbal MI inquires
 - Written standard responses
 - Staffing of medical booth
 - Insight on the challenges of aligning MI processes across a partnership

Results

- From the original 34 emails disseminated, 17 recipients responded.

Results

Figure 1. The various types of partnerships reported

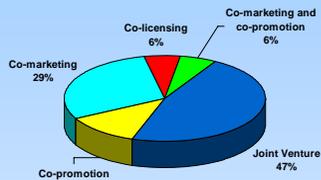
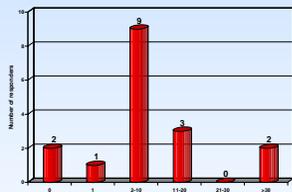


Figure 2. Frequency of MI communication across partnership



Verbal MI inquiries (during normal business hours):

- 24% stated that only one company is responsible

Emergency MI inquiries (after normal business hours):

- 41% stated both companies share responsibility

Delivery of written medical requests:

- 12% stated that sales representatives deliver healthcare MI request forms for product information to only one company

Written responses:

- 71% stated that both companies share the responsibility of creating and/or reviewing standard written responses to medical inquiries

Staffing MI booths for the same partnership product:

- 53% stated that both companies are responsible

Training field-based personnel:

- 64% stated that both companies are responsible

Figure 3. Primary responsibility for documenting AEs

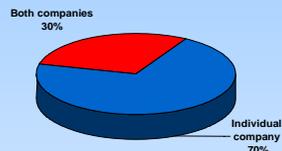


Figure 4. Primary responsibility as medical reviewer of promotional materials (advertisement, visual aids, brochures)



Table 1. Areas that posed a challenge when collaborating with counterpart*

Rating on 6-point scale	1	2	3	4	5	6
Scheduling for collaborative meetings	12%	35%	12%	12%	24%	6%
Aligning company goals and objectives	12%	12%	18%	29%	24%	6%
Location of partner company	29%	18%	12%	12%	18%	12%
Technology to communicate	24%	41%	29%	6%	0%	0%
Ambiguity of roles and responsibilities of team members from each company	18%	41%	12%	24%	6%	0%
Communication issues	6%	29%	35%	24%	0%	6%

*Based on a scale of 1-6 (1= does not pose a challenge; 6 = poses a great challenge)

Other challenges assessed included: different time lines, processes, and increase in duration of time to create or update a standard MI response.

Discussion

- The results of this exploratory survey demonstrated that pharmaceutical companies form many different types of partnerships. Less than half (47%) of the partnerships reported were joint venture.
- Approximately half (53%) of the recipients reported that they communicated at least 2-10 times a month with their MI counterpart. There were companies (12%) that did not communicate at all with each other and other companies (12%) that communicated at least 30 times a month.
- Across the partnership, 59% of respondents felt that aligning the goals and objectives of both companies posed a challenge.
- Twenty-nine percent of respondents did not feel that the location of their partner company was a significant challenge in collaborating with their counterpart.
- Only 30% of respondents reported that both companies documented AEs.
- The majority of responders (71%) reported that both companies collaborate in creating and/or updating standard written MI responses.

Limitations

- One limitation of the survey is the small sample size. Only 34 survey recipients (59% of the potential 58 MI specialists were contacted directly. Other recipients may have received the survey; however, this was not tracked in the survey.
- In addition, comparing the responses from MI counterparts across partnerships was not possible because of confidentiality reasons.

Conclusions

- Pharmaceutical companies form different and unique types of relationships and work processes with each other for partnership products. In addition, differences in MI processes existed among companies that formed similar types of partnerships (e.g., joint venture).
- The results of this survey may allow for future studies to elucidate deeper work processes of how more specific functions within MI (e.g., creation of standard response letters) are handled by both MI specialists from partner companies.

References

- Limpert B, Kim S. Biotechnology Alliances: Co-development and co-marketing agreements. [Gowlings]. Available at: <http://www.gowlings.com/resources/PublicationPDFs/BiotechnologyCoDev.pdf>. Accessed February 19, 2007.
- Mendes P. Licensing and technology transfer in the pharmaceutical industry. [World Intellectual Property Organization Web site]. Available at: http://www.wipo.int/sme/en/documents/pharma_licensing.html#P1122_66903. Accessed February 19, 2007.
- Pirra C. The Position of Co-marketing and Co-promotion Between EU Regulatory and Competition Rules. Regulatory Affairs Journal. 2002;13:653-660. Available at <http://www.franzosi.com/englist/article/legals15.htm>. Accessed February 19, 2007.

Acknowledgements

Carolyn Seyss, Pharm.D., Rupa Shah, Pharm.D., Deena Said, Pharm.D., Stella Nam, Pharm.D.

Disclosure

All authors of this study are paid employees of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.