Evaluation of Pharmaceutical Industry-Based Medical Information Websites for Healthcare Providers

James DeMicco, Pharm.D., Nisha Patel, Pharm.D., Rajesh Patel, Pharm.D., Evelyn Hermes-DeSantis, Pharm.D., BCPS

Background

Increasingly, healthcare providers (HCPs) are seeking faster and easier ways to access Medical Information (MI). As a result, pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies are developing innovative ways to deliver MI. This trend has led to an increasing number of companies developing websites that contain both MI responses as well as disease state information. Not only does this online service allow HCPs to obtain immediate answers, but it also allows them to search for responses at their own convenience. Currently, many companies are seeking best practices from other companies who have developed a successful website to assist in the development of their own company’s website.

Objectives

• Evaluate how many companies are utilizing an MI website to deliver medical information to HCPs.
• Evaluate what resources are made available to HCPs via MI websites.

Methods

A 26-question online survey was sent via electronic mail (e-mail) to 23 pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies in which MI personnel contact information was available.

MI personnel were given three weeks to respond with a reminder e-mail sent 10 days into the survey period.

After demographic information was collected, companies identified as having an MI website could continue the survey to answer a maximum of 26 questions.

Participants were informed that results would remain anonymous and the information obtained would only be used to monitor which companies completed the survey to ensure accurate analysis.

Results

• Out of 18 companies surveyed, 61% had MI websites for HCPs.
• There was no correlation between the size of the company or the number of products supported, and the availability of an MI website.
• Over half of the companies required HCPs to register with their license number before access was granted to the MI website.
• Current MI websites provided access to MI letters, slides, articles, posters, patient education materials, and general disease state information.
• MI letters available for print were associated with a watermark and/or prescribing information (PI) for 60% of the websites.
• In addition to approved product information, 73% of companies provided off-label product information and 36% of companies provided investigational product information.
• A majority of companies (82%) allowed MI requests to be submitted via the website if information was not found.
• All company websites were updated on an as needed basis; two companies also updated their website weekly.

Discussion

• The results of this survey can be utilized by companies to establish or enhance an MI website.

Disclosure

Deena Said, Pharm.D.; Cynthia Donovan, Pharm.D., BCPS; Catherine Dormianu, Pharm.D., BCPS; Mary Coffey, Pharm.D.