

The practitioner view

Charlotte Wright

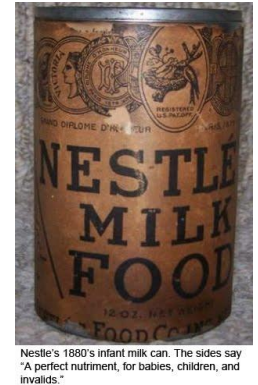
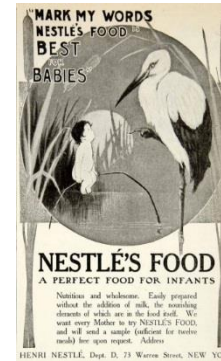
Consultant Paediatrician, NHS GGC

Professor of Community Child Health

University of Glasgow

“Health care workers should be educated on their responsibilities under the Code and national legislation to avoid conflicts of interest and fully protect, promote and support breastfeeding”

Paediatricians and the formula milk industry



Nestlé's 1880's infant milk can. The sides say "A perfect nutriment, for babies, children, and invalids."

- Early 20th century: Regulation
 - Concerns about safety and appropriate use
 - Paediatricians lobbied for regulation
 - Worked with companies to develop 'safe' formula milk
- Mid 20th century: Dependence
 - Formula milk companies funding wide range of education activities
 - Core funding for organisations

Breaking the ties

- UK experience: RCPCH and BMJ moved from increasing engagement with formula milk industry in 2015 to completely refusing all funding in 2019
 - Result of lobbying, bad publicity and change of leadership
- Requires
 - Ambition
 - Recruit younger paediatricians
 - Willingness to be unpopular
 - Push on opening door



Leading UK child health body under fire over baby milk sponsorship

Royal College of Paediatrics urged to rethink conference funding amid claims deal contravenes World Health Organization code



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EDITORIALS

Calling time on formula milk adverts

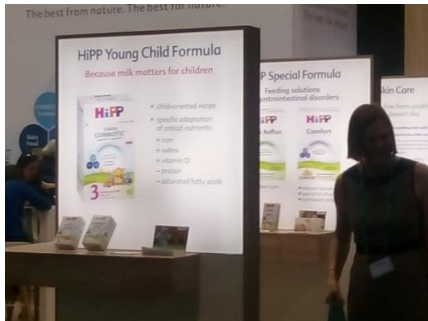
The BMJ and our sister journals will no longer carry ads for breastmilk substitutes

Fiona Godlee *editor in chief*¹, Sophie Cook *head of scholarly comment*¹, Rebecca Coombes *head of news and views*¹, Emad El-Omar *editor in chief*², Nick Brown *editor in chief*³

¹The BMJ, London, UK; ²Gut, London, UK; ³Archives of Diseases in Childhood, London, UK

Role of international conferences in promoting formula milk

- Some organisations still run meetings that attract huge formula milk subsidy
 - Directly funded delegates
 - Covertly funded via organisational scholarships
 - Huge trade stands
 - Generous hospitality
- Officially no COI, but attract selective, favourable research
- Time to name and shame?



Changing practitioners' attitudes

- In order to resist formula milk influence health staff need to truly understand:
 - Physiology of breast feeding
 - Conflict of interest
 - How to support breastfeeding mothers
- UNICEF UK developing learning objectives and quality teaching materials
- More support needed for staff and systems, even in countries with high breastfeeding rates

