In this second module, we looked at: probity in the relationships between psychiatrists, the pharmaceutical industry and other commercial organisations; seeking funds for meetings, publications, research, prizes, travelling fellowships and public education activities; research undertaken on behalf of the Royal College of Psychiatrists; good practice when working with colleagues; self-declaration of probity and health by doctors; guidelines on self-prescribing and declaration of illness and guidelines on prescribing for friends and family.

Research undertaken by psychiatrists and other related activities

- There is a wide range of opinion on the issue of the relationship between psychiatrists undertaking research and commercial organisations, especially the pharmaceutical industry.
- You should be aware of the boundaries of good practice and try to avoid the reality and/or the perception that a psychiatrist's professional judgement may be influenced by commercial organisations.

The relationship between College activities and other organisations

- Advertising should not directly promote a particular product except for advertisements in Royal College of Psychiatrists journals or exhibition stands.
- The Royal College of Psychiatrists and organisers retain control of the whole process.
- Prizes, fellowships, and the Royal College of Psychiatrists website should not be sponsored by commercial organisations especially the pharmaceutical industry.
- There are issues arising when working with colleagues.

Working with colleagues

- When working with colleagues, you should respect the skills and contributions of any team members, and treat your colleagues fairly and with respect.
- It is important to protect patients from risk of harm posed by another colleague’s health, conduct or performance by investigating your concerns. However, you must not make malicious and unfounded criticism of colleagues that may undermine patients' trust in care or treatment they receive.

Probity and health declaration for annual appraisal

- Doctors must voluntarily declare the following information:
  - whether they have been cautioned, charged or convicted of any criminal offence
  - whether they have any completed or pending cases considered by the GMC or other professional regulatory or licensing bodies
  - any disciplinary action by their employers or contractor of care provision
  - any health-related proceedings by the GMC or other professional regulatory or licensing bodies, employers or contractors of care provision
- They must ensure that health problems do not put patients at risk, and obtain independent advice and treatment for mental and physical health problems.
Useful websites

Advertising Standards Agency  
European Medical Writers Association  
National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)  
NHS Quality Improvement Scotland  
The Committee on Standards in Public Life (the Nolan Committee)

Further reading

European Medical Writers Association (2010) Guidance on professional and ethical working standards. [website]

International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (IMJCE) (2010) Obligation to Register Clinical Trials. [website]

Sources of further help and support

British Medical Association  
BMA House, Tavistock Square  
London WC1H 9JP  
Tel: 020 7387 4499

General Medical Council  
Tel: 0161 923 6602  
Email: gmc@gmc-uk.org

Hospital Consultants and Specialists Association  
1 Kingsclere Road, Overton, Basingstoke  
Hants RG25 3JA  
Tel: 01256 771777  
Email: conspec@hcsa.com

Medical and Dental Defence Union of Scotland  
Tel: 0333 043 4444  
Email: info@mddus.com

Medical Defence Union Limited  
One Canada Square  
London E14 5GS  
Medicolegal helpline: 0800 716 646  
Email: mdu@themdu.com

Medical Protection Society  
Medicolegal advice: 0800 561 9090  
Email: info@medicalprotection.org

National Clinical Assessment Service (NCAS)  
2nd Floor, 151 Buckingham Palace Road  
London SW1W 9SZ  
Tel: 020 7811 2600  
Email: casesupport@ncas.nhs.uk

NHS Counter Fraud Authority  
Skipton House, 80 London Road  
London SE1 6LH  
Tel: 020 7895 4500

Psychiatrists Support Service  
Royal College of Psychiatrists  
21 Prescott Street  
London E1 8BB  
Tel: 020 7245 0412  
Email: pss@rcpsych.ac.uk