

ASA rules on Patrick Holford product

The company advertising Patrick Holford's "Smart Kids Brain Boost" must stop making claims that it can result in improved mental or school performance until it can substantiate them, an Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) ruling released on Tuesday, 15 May 2012, said.

It also found that the product's name was misleading.

"The directorate is satisfied that the name 'Smart Kids Brain Boost' creates an expectation that this product will boost mental performance and/or abilities in children," the ASA said.

"Clearly such an implied claim is capable of objective verification. However, as the respondent's substantiation is not found adequate at this time, there is nothing before the directorate to show that the name is justified and reasonable."

A number of complaints had been made to the ASA following website and radio advertisements.

According to the online advertising, the "best way to nourish your child's brain to promote learning, memory and focus is to ensure they have an adequate intake of: phospholipids, the 'intelligent' fats; Amino Acids, build neurotransmitters that act as 'chemical messengers'," and "B vitamins that help to promote mental vitality".

The radio commercial asked: "Would you like your child to be top of the class?" and said the product contained "special phospholipids, B vitamins and amino acids that are vital for optimising the brain potential".

The first complainant argued there was no robust evidence to support the claims made on the website, and that the name of the product was misleading.

The second complaint said there was no evidence that the product would assist in improving scholastic or mental performance.

The distributors, More to Life, submitted verification from Professor Frederick Veldman and said that, on recommendation from Veldman, it would amend its reference to "top of class" to "... at the top of their own capacity/ability".

It would also remove its claim in relation to amino acids and B vitamins, in accordance with Veldman's confirmation that these were not directly supported by research findings.

The reference to phospholipids, however, was in accordance with evidence and was verified by Veldman.

The company said it was an accepted fact that children's nutritional status affected their mental or intellectual development.

The ASA said that considering the evidence supplied, it noted that none of the literature supplied in support of the respondent's claims appeared to relate to its product as it was sold in the market.

"For the above reasons, the directorate cannot, at this time, accept the substantiation submitted by the respondent."

More to Life MD Peter Brierley said: "We have not formally been informed of the ASA ruling as yet, and as soon as we have been informed we will make a decision."

Source: Sapa

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