

Research and development

"Ten per cent of the global pharmaceutical R&D expenditure goes towards diseases which account for 90 per cent of the world's disease burden."¹

Development of pharmaceuticals for diseases that represent the greatest need is an element of responsible manufacture. Consideration must be given to the global burden of the disease and the potential for benefit in combination with economic rationalizations. Pharmaceutical companies must remain financially viable if they are to continue to function but profits must be tempered by social responsibility.

Clinical Trials

Clinical trials should be carried out with reference to World Health Organisation guidelines to ensure the safety and independence of participants as well as the validity of results.

Results of clinical trials should be freely available without alteration or bias.

Those participating in clinical trials should be assured continued free access to medicines with positive outcomes in life threatening situations.

Manufacture

Raw materials from natural products should be produced in a sustainable way ensuring minimal impact on the land.

Workers at all stages during research and manufacture should receive fair remuneration for their services.

Occupational health and safety standards should be upheld to ensure the wellbeing of workers and the safety of medicines.

Manufacturing processes should be optimized to minimize environmental impact, including reducing carbon emissions, recycling materials and disposing of waste products appropriately.

Packaging of medicines should be minimized, using recycled and recyclable products wherever possible.

Transport

Local manufacture reduces transport costs as well as minimizes environmental impact due to transport.

Local manufacturing creates jobs and supports local industry and innovation.

Pricing

The price of pharmaceuticals can be prohibitively expensive for some, particularly those in developing nations. Pharmaceutical companies have the greatest control over pricing factors and have the potential to make significant differences to health in developing nations

Tiered pricing systems for developing nations are essential to ensure long term, sustainable access to low cost medicines as well as a viable, profitable pharmaceutical industry.

Pharmaceutical companies should work together with governments to ensure access to essential medicines at affordable prices.

Corporate sustainability and transparency

To ensure a sustainable pharmaceutical industry, profit must be made however, not at the expense of human and environmental needs. The last step in responsible development of pharmaceuticals is evaluation.

Triple bottom line reporting allows analysis of economic, social and environmental parameters affording opportunity for identification of areas for improvement in the development, manufacture, transport and distribution of medicines.

Companies should have a policy of transparency to bolster confidence from the public and the stock holder to ensure development of innovative medicines in a viable pharmaceutical industry continues.

1. Beyond Philanthropy: the pharmaceutical industry, corporate social responsibility and the developing world
Accessed 08/10/09 from <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/policy/health/downloads/beyondphilanthropy.pdf>