

Submission from Dr Aster LAU Wai-yee

Hong Kong Code of Marketing and Quality of Formula Milk and Related Products, and Food

Products for Infants & Young Children

Panel on Health Services Special meeting on 10 April 2017

1. I support The Code.
2. As a frontline family doctor, I have come across many patients, who are parents or other care takers of infant and young children, asking for suggestions on infant formula for their children. It shows that the current marketing and information flow is chaotic, and even mis-leading.
3. Marketing strategies of formula milk usually include distributing samples and posters to doctors and clinics. The display of these products and posters may lead to an impression that the health care workers agree with the claims made by the manufacturers. Moreover, giving free samples has been shown to encourage more consumption of the products.
4. Nowadays, many manufacturers of formula milk claim that they support breastfeeding and show relevant information on their websites. However, these information are often presented in a way that amplifies the difficulty and low success rate of exclusive breastfeeding, instead of encouraging mothers to work towards exclusive breastfeeding.
5. When many lay people tend to believe in the information shown in advertisement rather than professional advice, it is time to rectify the liberal market for promotion of these infant and young children food products.