

Breaking the Law and Undermining Breastfeeding

Series 1 (2005)



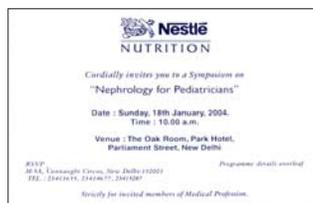
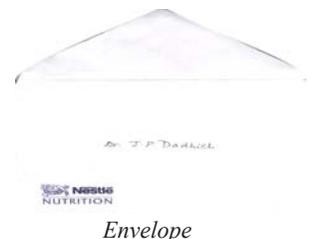
Breastfeeding and infant health in India are under attack. India, with about 26 million births annually, is a flourishing market for manufacturers of baby food and feeding bottle. Research throughout the world shows that breastmilk is the best food for infants. WHO, UNICEF and Government of India recommend that all infants should be exclusively breastfed for the first six months and continue breastfeeding for two years or beyond along with appropriate homemade complementary feeding starting after six months. Baby foods, whether breastmilk substitutes or weaning foods, are neither good for the baby, nor are they necessary except in very rare cases. In spite of this, breastfeeding is on the decline in our country. An important reason for this is the aggressive marketing of baby foods. On the top of this people lack the access to information about optimal infant feeding practices.

India was one of the first countries to adopt International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes as Law "The Infant Milk Substitutes, Feeding Bottles and Infant Foods (Regulation of Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 1992". After 10 years of its enactment, a need was felt to strengthen the legislation and it was amended in 2003 (referred to as *The IMS Act* hereafter). Despite this legislation the commercial sector continues to find ways and means to market their products that undermine breastfeeding. The interest of baby food companies is in increasing sales and profit, in this case they do by breaking the law. Let's have a look at some of their activities that violate the IMS Act. These were reported during the period January 2004 to June 2004. This is just a tip of the iceberg and a lot more must be happening that goes unreported.

HOW DO BABY FOOD COMPANIES BREAK THE LAW?

Nestle Sponsors Pediatrics Symposiums

The IMS Act specifically bans baby food manufacturers from sponsoring events including meeting of health professionals. However, companies like Nestle continue to sponsor events for doctors, nurses and paramedical staff in order to woo them into recommending their products to parents. A pediatrician in Delhi received an invitation from "Nestle Nutrition" to attend a symposium, which is a violation of the IMS Act.



Frontside of the Card

TIME	TOPIC	FACULTY
10:30 a.m.	Hypertensive Child	Dr. A. Bhatt Dr. A. K. Bhatnagar Dr. A. S. Vaidya Dr. Rajendra Kumar Dr. P.K. Datta Dr. C.P. Jaiswal
	Diagnosis, Nephrotic Syndrome- Current trends in management	Dr. Parag Hari Dr. P.C. Gupta Dr. K.K. Prasad
	Sodium Imbalance - How much to treat?	Dr. Praem Khatri Dr. R.N. Sinhasra Dr. Sanjay Bhatnagar Dr. Suk Choudhary Dr. Vinay Agarwal
2:30 p.m.	Obstructive Nephropathy - Medical or Surgical problem?	
	Renal failure in Pediatric ICU - Meet the experts	
	Interesting Case Presentations	

Backside of the Card

Invitation card from Nestle to attend a symposium received by a doctor in Delhi.

Raptakos Brett & Co. Ltd. Providing Incomplete Information to Public in Madhya Pradesh

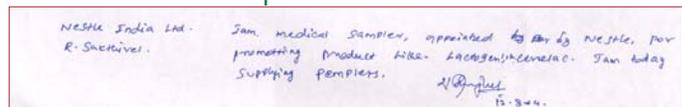
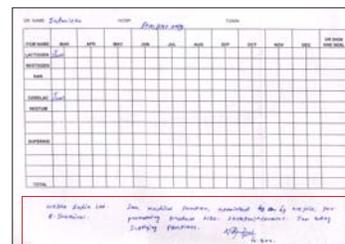
According to the IMS Act, information and educational material, intended to reach pregnant or lactating women must contain specific details and warnings. This poster by Raptakos, Brett and Co. Ltd. distributed to doctors in Madhya Pradesh **does not carry such information as benefits of breastmilk, harmful effects of bottle-feeding, health hazards of improper use of infant milk substitute etc.** It does not as well carry the date of printing and name of the publisher and printer as mandated by the Law.



Poster distributed by Raptakos, Brett and Co. Ltd. on breastfeeding

Nestle Promoting Lactogen and Cerelac to Mothers Through Doctors in Tamil Nadu

Healthcare professionals are immensely important as a source of information on infant feeding, as advice and information given by them has great influence on parents especially mothers. Companies are always trying to exploit this “power of influence” of doctors for increasing their sales. They distribute educational material about their products to doctors, so that the doctors recommend it to pregnant and lactating women. These educational materials, which give incomplete and often biased information, serve as a direct method of advertisement of the products. Not only is the promotion of infant milk and food illegal, but also using health professionals indirectly as promoters is violative of the IMS Act. Alongside is the evidence of how Nestle uses doctors to promote *Lactogen* and *Cerelac* with mothers. A representative from the company visited a hospital in Chidambaram in Tamil Nadu and distributed promotional material about *Lactogen* and *Cerelac* meant for mothers in local language. The representative commits in writing, “I am medical sampler appointed by Nestle for promoting products like Lactogen 1 & 2, Cerelac. I am today supplying pamphlets.”



Information material distributed by Nestle India Ltd to doctors.

Raptakos, Brett & Co. Ltd. Reaches Desk of Doctors All Over India to Promote Baby Foods

In another instance of promotion to doctors, Raptakos, Brett and Co. Ltd. mailed information material to all members of Indian Academy of Pediatrics. This material contains promotion material about their infant milk substitutes such as *Lactodex-HMF*, *Lactodex-LBW*, *Lactodex Starter Formula*, *Lactodex Follow-up Formula*, *Lactodex NMW 1 & 2* and infant foods such as *Veelac Classic*, *Veelac Wheat*. Such mailing of information material to doctors violates the IMS Act and is illegal.



Information material distributed by Raptakos, Brett and Company.

Nestle Providing Immunisation Cards to Reach Parents in Punjab

Companies often use the healthcare system as a bridge for reaching mothers. For instance, Nestle India Ltd. distributed immunisation record cards intended to reach mothers as well as other printed material on baby foods to doctors in order to project themselves as good company that cares for children, and whom mothers can trust. Nestle's actions violate the IMS Act in many ways. Firstly, the immunization cards are an incentive for both doctors as well as mothers. Secondly, the printed material in local languages given to health professionals included promotional information about *Lactogen* and *Cerelac* – the company's baby food products.



Information material and immunisation card distributed by Nestle.

You Can Help Protect Babies Health and Check Companies Breaking the Law

Public

1. Boycott all other products produced by baby food companies who break the IMS Act.
2. Stop accepting any kind of benefits from these companies.
3. Write to manufactures of baby food to stop such practices (Addresses are given below)
4. Spread the message by telling more people to voice their protest to the companies and reject such messages that undermine breastfeeding.
5. Whenever you spot instances of promotion of baby foods such as shown here, bring it to our notice.

Health Professionals

1. Do not accept any benefits/ sponsorships/ gifts from baby food manufacturers.
2. Demand only accurate information from companies. Ask companies to stop trying to mislead you.

Governments

1. Disseminate accurate information on optimal infant feeding practices
2. Take steps to enforce IMS Act and initiate legal action against those violating it.
3. Regularly monitor the activities of baby food companies to ensure that they do not violate the IMS Act.

Industry

1. Put health before profits
2. Comply with all the provisions of the IMS Act
3. Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce (FICCI), Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry in India (ASSOCHAM) should ensure full compliance of the IMS Act by their member companies.

Addresses of Baby Food Companies Mentioned in this Brochure

Nestle House,
Jacaranda Marg,
M- Block, DLF City Phase II,
Gurgaon 122002, Haryana, India

Raptakos, Brett & Co. Ltd.
Dr. Annie Besant Road
Worli,
Mumbai 400018

This brochure "Breaking the Law and Undermining Breastfeeding - Series 1" is a part of the series to expose what baby food companies do to market their products.

Issued in public interest by:



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The Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI) is a registered, independent, non-profit, national organization that works towards protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding and appropriate complementary feeding of infants & young children. BPNI believes that breastfeeding is the right of all mothers and children. BPNI works through advocacy, social mobilization, information sharing, education, research, training and monitoring the company compliance with the IMS Act. BPNI does not accept funds or sponsorship of any kind from the companies producing infant milk substitutes, feeding bottles, related equipments, or infant foods (*cereal foods*).