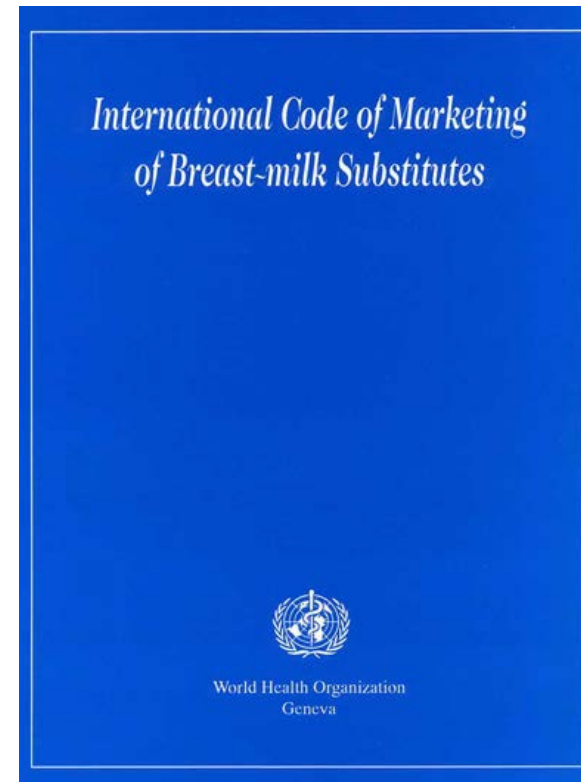




They push their products through me: health professionals' perspective on and exposure to marketing of commercial milk formula in Cape Town and Johannesburg

Background

- In 1981, the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes was adopted to regulate the marketing of breast-milk substitutes.
- Included specific provisions to protect health professionals from inappropriate engagement by industry
- Forty years on, formula milk marketing is widespread and aggressive



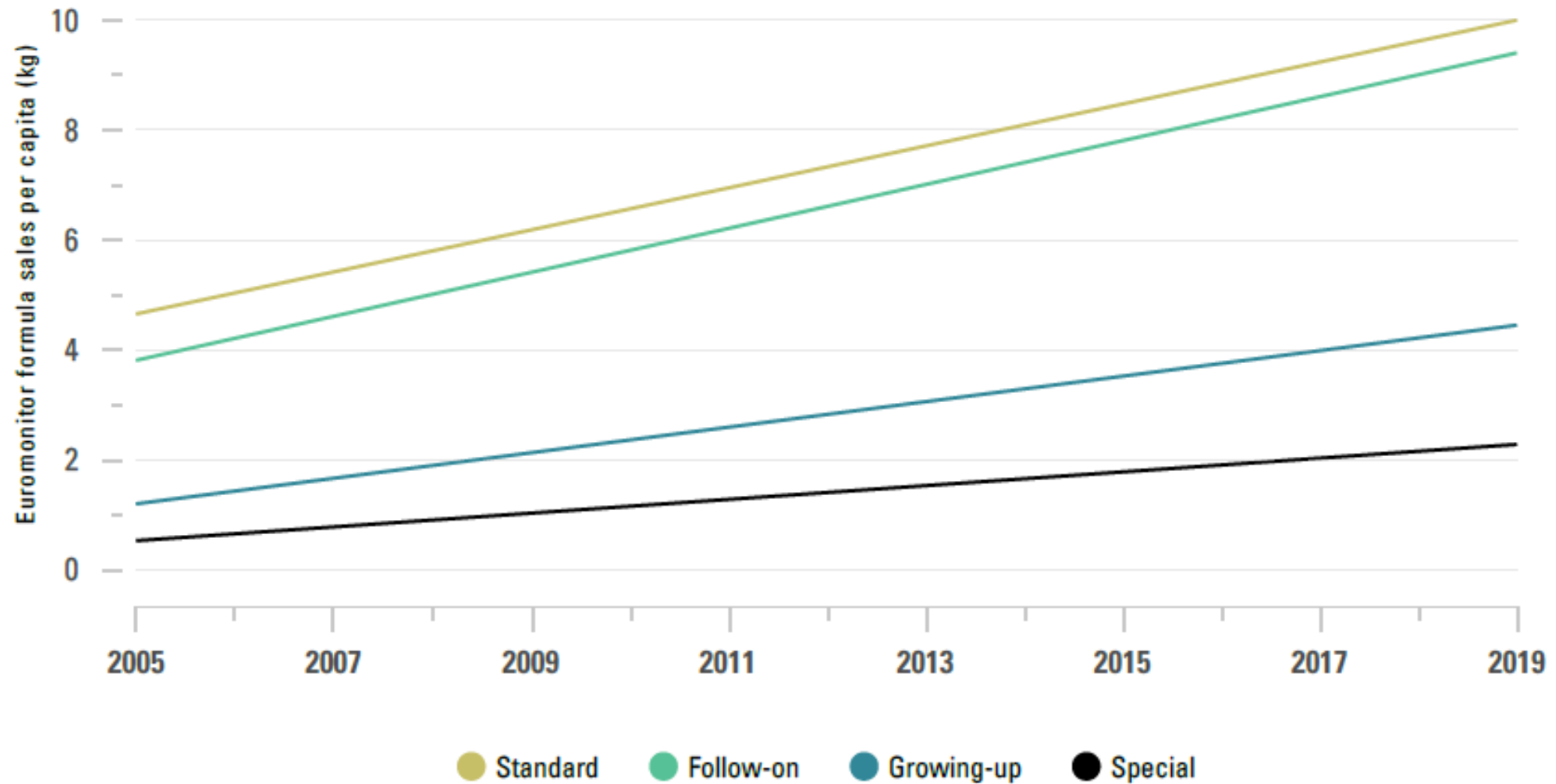


Figure 1. Sales of commercial milk formulas per capita (for ages 0–36 months), 2005–2019
Source: Euromonitor international; packaged food industry edition 2019 (190 countries)

Large budgets fuel the power of marketing



What we do know ...

In 2019,
annual sales were
US\$ 55 bn

• **5-10%** of annual sales
invested in marketing
= **US\$ 3-5 billion**
per year

VS.

WHO operating budget
(2020 and 2021)
= **US\$ 5.8 billion**
for 2 years

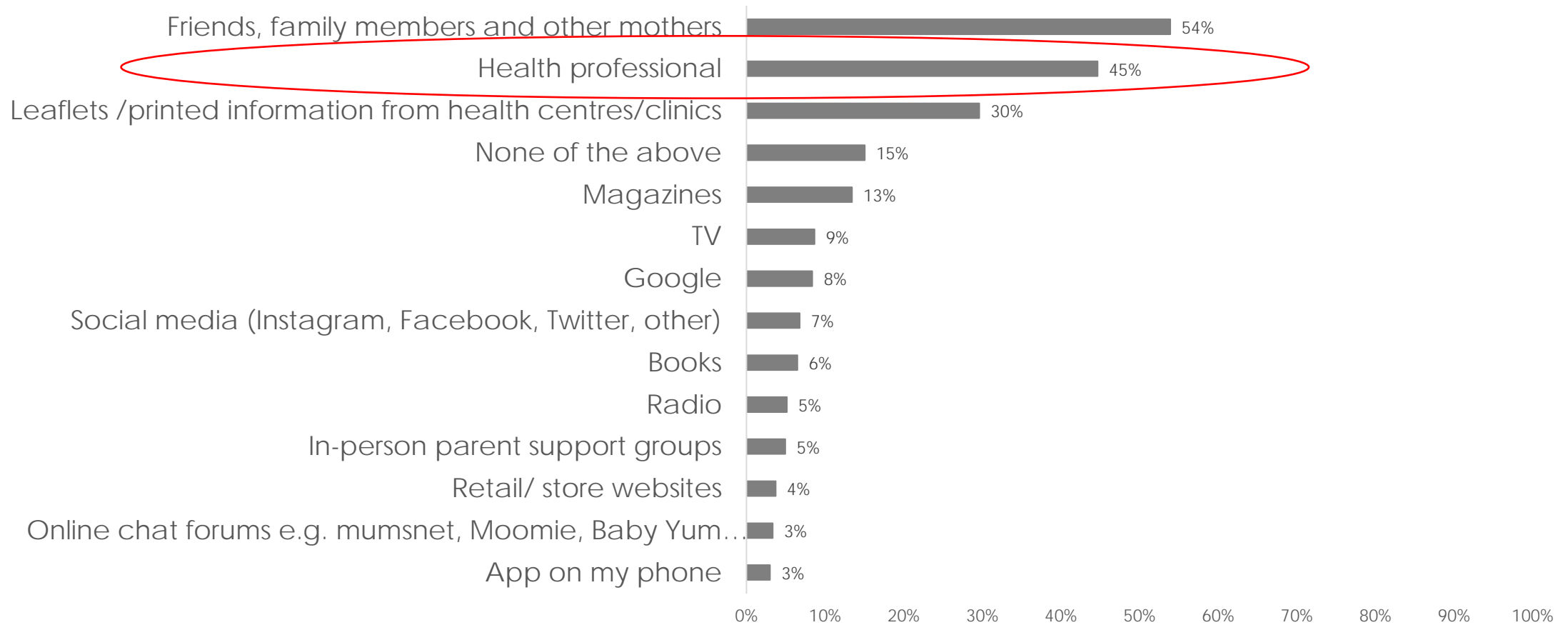
Framing the issue

- Marketing vs the product
- Right to accurate and impartial information and support
- Public health interests vs commercial interests

Background

- Breastfeeding in South Africa is protected by regulations that restrict the marketing of designated products for children under the age of 3 years. This includes the R991 regulations (2012), which enact the Code.

Results: sources of information on infant feeding



Health professionals are an important target for marketing

“Actually, for me it was a doctor who told me that I should use Pelargon as it is light and therefore similar to breast milk. The doctor was actually saying even if the mom is not breastfeeding the child, if they are giving them Pelargon it’s actually tantamount to giving them breast milk”

“Well, my paediatrician only spoke Nestle products so I’ve only known Nan and Lactogen, so with my son now I did the same start process, he was on the allergy and then on Nan for two months and then Lactogen.” (Horwood et al., 2022, p7)

Formula milk marketing to health professionals is ubiquitous and takes many forms

- Multiple channels and approaches:
 - Sponsoring conferences, training and events
 - Advertising in academic journals
 - Unsolicited emails
 - Sponsoring academic fellowships and prizes
 - Co-opting leaders in child health and nutrition
 - Company rep visits to private practices and hospitals

WHO/UNICEF Multi-country study,
2022

Multi-country study examining the impact of marketing of breast-milk substitutes on infant feeding decisions and practices: commissioned report

BY M&C SAATCHI WORLD SERVICES

<https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/354094>

Sponsoring conferences, training and
events

Health professional training

- Nutrition institutes
- Sponsored talks and events



Nestlé
Nutrition Institute
Africa

YOU'RE
INVITED

ALLSA Breakfast Symposium:

SWEET-TALKING ALLERGIES



Speaker: **Dr. Martin Davis**
Date: **Sunday, 28 July 2019**
Time: **07:00 - 08:00**
Venue: **Amethyst Room - CSIR**

Details: Dr. Martin Davis & Dr. Etienne Nel will present their expert views and opinions at this CPD accredited event. **Nestlé Nutrition Institute Africa** is honoured to bring this thought provocative topic during the **breakfast session** on Sunday 28 July 2019.

AGENDA:

07:00 – 07:05 Opening and Welcome
07:05 – 07:25 An introduction to breastmilk sugars - Dr. Etienne Nel
07:25 – 07:55 The immune modifying effect of Human milk oligosaccharides



Nestlé Nutrition Institute Africa (NNIA)

1,937 followers

+ Follow

View full page



Nestlé Nutrition Institute Africa (NNIA)

1,937 followers

4mo • Edited •

+ Follow



Watch the recording of Dr Mihatsch's presentation on the 2022 ESPGHAN Guidelines on Feeding the Preterm Infant: 16 February 2024, Cape Town. <https://lnkd.in/diZq8t32>



The **NNIA** hosted 5 workshops across South Africa for dietitians, neonatologists, and paediatricians on the 2022 ESPGHAN Guidelines on Feeding the Preterm Infant. This recording is of the workshop held on **16 February 2024 in Cape Town.**

Watch the recording



2



41st National Congress of the South African Society of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists

Sun City Convention Centre Wed 28 Aug - Sat 31 Aug

Sponsors & Exhibitors

For sponsorship and exhibition inquiries, kindly contact meride@london.co.za

The image displays a grid of 50 logos for sponsors and exhibitors. The logos are arranged in approximately 10 rows and 5 columns. Two logos are circled in red: Abbott (top row, first column) and Nestle Nutrition (seventh row, fourth column). Other notable logos include Pfizer, Cipla, and various medical and pharmaceutical brands.

Marketing to health professionals



Conferences

- High visibility presence
- Free gifts
- Sponsored dinners

Excessive Crying & Intestinal Gas

- 1 Low Lactose
- 2 Whey Protein

Relieve Symptoms of Colic in 87.9% of Babies After 8 Days*

- Reducing Excess Gas*
- Significantly Reducing Duration of Crying*

Treatment of Diarrhoea

- 1 Lactose & Sucrose Free
- 2 Thickener: Pre-treated Rice Starch
- 3 Increased electrolytes
- 4 Banana & Apple Pulp

Rehydrate & Feed by:

- Providing Maximum Energy for Weight Recovery*
- Improving Digestion & Absorption*
- Rapid Recovering of the Normal Stools*
- Stimulating Feeding with Pleasant Taste*

Hungry & Sleepless Infants

- 1 Casein Protein
- 2 Thickener: Pre-treated Corn Starch
- 3 Refined Lactose

Help Hungry & Sleepless Babies by:

- Increasing Satiety*
- Decreasing Regurgitation*
- Decreasing Daily Ingested Milk Volume*



SANDTON C.C. J'BURG
5-6 MARCH 2025

South Africa's Dedicated GP/Doctors Event

Silver & Bronze Sponsors



Advertising in academic journals

Username
Password
 Remember me
[Login](#)

Impact factor: 1.500

JOURNAL CONTENT

Search

All

[Search](#)

Browse

- By Issue
- By Author
- By Title

- [Home](#)
- [About](#)
- [Register](#)
- [Search](#)
- [Issues](#)
- [Author](#)
- [Reviewer](#)
- [CPD](#)
- [Journals](#)
- [Announcements](#)

Home > **Vol 114, No 5 (2024)**

South African Medical Journal

The *South African Medical Journal (SAMJ)* - first published in 1884 - is a monthly, peer reviewed, general medical journal publishing leading research impacting clinical care in Africa. The journal now incorporates continuing medical education (CME).

Announcements

Author warning - fraudulent payment request emails

Authors are advised to be aware of and cautious with regards to paying publication fee payments to scammers and predatory journals.

Posted: 2023-02-09

[More...](#)

Migration to new editorial platform

The South African Medical Journal is pleased to launch a new submission and tracking system for the SAMJ as of 1 September 2022: <https://samajournals.co.za/index.php/samj/index>.

Posted: 2022-08-31

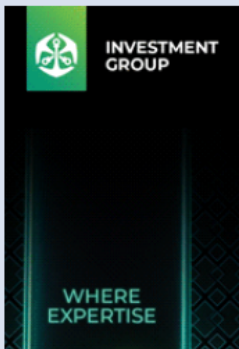
[More...](#)

SAMJ March 2024

The full issue of Vol. 114 No. 3 is available for viewing here: [March issue](#)

Posted: 2022-04-05

[More...](#)



Open access policy


Nestlé
Nutrition
Online



Access tools,
resources,
e-learning
& more

[SIGN ME UP](#)

Unsolicited emails from industry
institutes



Unsolicited email contact

Dear Sr [REDACTED]

I hope this mail finds you well.

My name is Natalie and I am the website lead for Nestlé Nutrition Online, our exclusive online portal for registered healthcare professionals.

I would like to invite you to register on our website as I believe the content will be of value to you.

The site contains useful tools, infographics, articles, a microbiome E-learning, with a new E learning launching soon as well as factual and scientific information relating to infant nutrition.

Registration is free and is simply needed to confirm that you are a healthcare professional.

Let me know if you need any assistance in registering.

Click on "Register" below to create your profile and get access.



Sponsoring academic fellowships and prizes

Sponsorship of prizes and awards



Session 6: Allergy Olympics: Chairs Mike Levin and Bryan Martin		
15:45 – 16:00	Introduction to Allergy Olympics	Mike Levin
16:00 – 16:40	Inaugural Allergy Olympics	Contestants
16:40 – 16:50	Virtual trophy presentation	Aspen and Nestle
16:50 – 17:00	Thanks and close	Andre Van Niekerk



STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

A 2 year fellowship, supported by the European Society of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition and the Nestle Nutrition Institute, is available at the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences of Stellenbosch University, South Africa

City: Stellenbosch

Contact person: Dr. Etienne Nel

E-Mail: edn@sun.ac.za

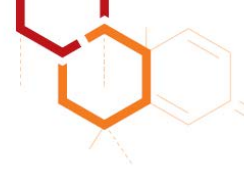
Country: South Africa

Course: Clinical Training

Website: <http://www.sun.ac.za/english>

Co-opting leaders in child health and nutrition

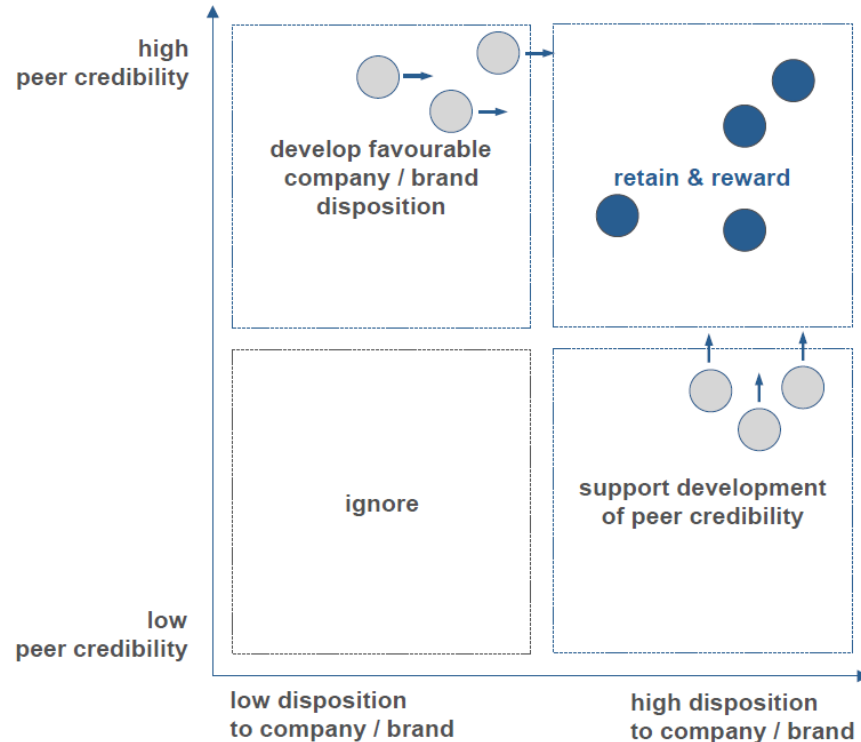
Influencing policy



sahara salt
CONSULTING

Nestle Nutrition South Africa
Stakeholder Mapping

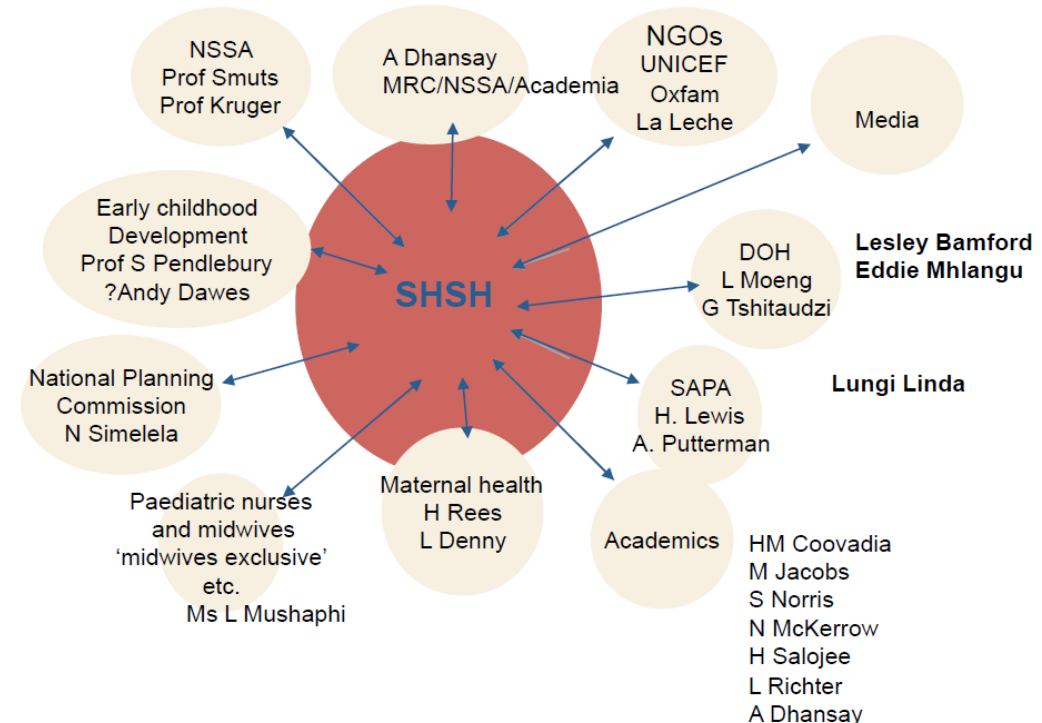
Opinion Leader Profiler



Key Opinion leaders

The Sahara Salt Perspective

GAIN
TAC
MSF





Nestlé Good food, Good life

Search



[Home](#) [About us](#) [Our stories](#) [Brands](#) [Sustainability](#) [Nutrition](#) [Ask Nestlé](#)

[Careers](#) [Investors](#) [Media](#)

[Home](#) > [Media](#) > [Press releases](#) > [Nestlé nominates Lindiwe Majele Sibanda to join its Board of Directors, provides update on Annual General Meeting](#)

FEB 18, 2021

Nestlé nominates Lindiwe Majele Sibanda to join its Board of Directors, provides update on Annual General Meeting

Share this page



UP and Nestlé forge a transformative partnership to advance food research and education



“

By working together under this transformative MoU, Nestlé and UP strive to lead the way in shaping the future of food and nutrition research, education, and sustainability.

Company rep visits to private practices
and hospitals

Industry systematically targets health professionals

- *“I see the formula reps a lot. I see at least 3 of them that I see regularly. They tell me all the latest and I can never remember all of the special things that they tell me. I have millions of pamphlets. Yeah, and they push their products through me.” (IDI-23, general practitioner, private practice, Cape Town)*
- *“Nestle NAN would come and they would give in-service training on their new products and stuff. Maybe once every 4 to 6 months. It would just be about the new type of NAN and the added benefits as opposed to the old NAN – that’s basically it and how it affects the gut and things like that.”(IDI-27, maternity and postnatal nurse, private hospital, Cape Town)*

Health professionals contact with BMS companies

- *“What we’re telling them, it is the best because nowadays, there’s those formulas who are made really exactly like breast milk.” (IDI-19, paediatric nurse, private retail pharmacy, Johannesburg)*
- *“There are formulas that are very close to having ingredients, if I may call it that, that are in breast milk. I found that there are such formulas that give almost the same amount of nutrients and it’s very close to breast milk. There are formulas that have gone that far.” (IDI-20, antenatal and postnatal nurse, public clinic, Johannesburg)*

Role of private pharmacies in marketing

I think I just got the best news on the planet, when she (pharmacy nurse) said, “Stop doing this to yourself mommy, put your baby on formula, come let me take you”, and she literally stood there with me in front of that aisle ... Every single formula she pointed to, right, this one is good for the tummy, this one is good for (trails off). I was like wow. And she was like, I recommend NAN, she gave me a little tin, and we went, and she even phoned me a week later, how you doing? (FGD J4, mixed feeding)

Manufacturers position their products as the solution to normal unsettled infant behaviours

“We have a rep that comes and tells us about Novalac and explains the difference between the different types – the one for colic and the one for diarrhoea. There’s formula for regurgitation, for colic, for babies that are crying excessively, those who have gas, those who are constipated quite often, those who have diarrhoea breastfeeding. So yeah, there’s something for everybody...Yes, every type of baby.” (IDI-01, general practitioner, private practice, Johannesburg)

Misleading scientific claims



Science is a **dominant theme**, including scientific imagery, language and pseudo-scientific claims.



Formula products are **positioned as close to**, equivalent and sometimes superior to breast-milk, and **scientific evidence misused** to infer improved health outcomes.



New products **focus on allergies and sensitivities**, a major area of new sales and business growth.

Health professional's knowledge of the R991 regulations

Less than half (19) of the health professionals had ever heard of the South African regulation relating to foodstuffs for infants and young children

- *"I think we've heard more from the actual manufacturers what's required, than anyone else I'd think. So we have had exposure, but funny enough mainly from the actual manufacturers and what they can't do" (IDI-02, paediatrician, private hospital, Johannesburg)*
- *"I wasn't aware (of the legislation) and the thing is – now that you ask me, I feel like we had conferences, educational conferences, paediatric ones, where there has been nutrition companies who have given us information on different types of formula." (Paediatrician, public hospital, Johannesburg)*

What does this mean for individual health professionals

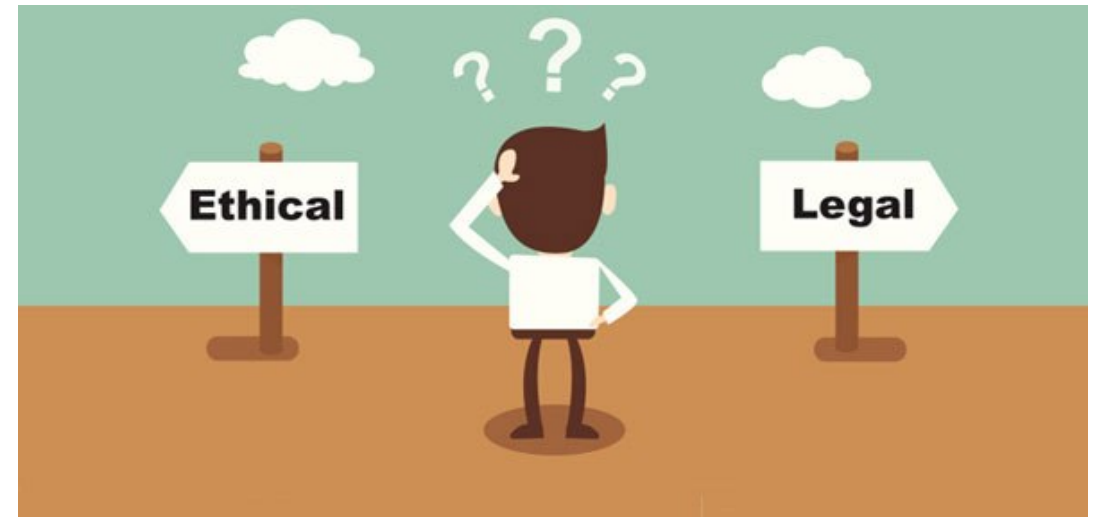
To be clear...

- We are all influenced by marketing in our daily lives
- In public health...strong body of evidence of effect
 - Sugar sweetened beverages
 - Alcohol
 - Gambling
 - Infant formula products

The problem is the marketing practice of industry

- Not the availability of formula products in supermarkets
- Not the choices of women or families

Conflicts of interest



Public health vs economic or other interests

- Conflicting loyalties that influence the way individuals act that may breach their obligations to the health and well-being of their patients

Engagement with industry influences

- Our understanding, decision-making and support to families and women

Problem statement

Health professionals-
individually and their
associations-are a key target
and asset in the marketing
strategies of formula milk
companies



Question

How do we, as trusted and
influential professionals,
protect and prioritise child
health over shareholder
benefits?

How do we counteract this influence

- Sensitize health professionals to local legislation (R991) in pre-service and in-service settings
- The code includes a total prohibition of any type of promotion of products that fall within their scope in the health services but we are failing to monitor and enforce this, especially in the private sector
- Explicitly reject formula milk marketing and influence in healthcare settings
- Improve breastfeeding education, training and skills of healthcare professionals (including preparing women for normal early infant developmental behaviour (crying, posseting, short-night time sleep))
- Misconceptions about the equivalence of formula to breastfeeding should be corrected

Be proactive

- Prevention is key. Instead of waiting for violations to happen and reporting them after the event ... take the initiative and raise a red flag with the organisers, media and NDoH



STOKVEL Mum and Child Forum

CALLING ALL MOMS WHO WANT TO LEARN ABOUT THE HEALTH AND NUTRITIONAL NEEDS OF YOUR NEWBORNS - OR TODDLERS.
GET YOUR **FREE TICKETS** FOR STOKVEL MUM AND CHILD FORUM!

SPONSORED BY
Nestlé CERELAC NIDO Nestlé NESTUM

Thulani Gqirana
Editor of DRUM

Dr Nomasono Magobe
Lerato Thabaneng
CERELAC
Refilwe Nkosi
NESTUM
Anouchka Britz
NIDO 3+

24 APRIL 2021 11AM - 12PM

Please see important notice on www.babyandme.nestle.co.za & www.nidokids.co.za

NOT TODAY NESTLE

YOU FOLLOW THE RULES, RIGHT?

CORPORATIONS SHOULD TOO.

BUT NESTLE'S LATEST CAMPAIGN VIOLATES SOUTH AFRICAN ADVERTISING RULES MEANT TO PROTECT CHILDREN.

Build alliances

Nestlé adds sugar to products sold in SA and poorer countries

 April 17, 2024

 Facebook

 Twitter

 WhatsApp

 LinkedIn

 Email

Nestlé is under fire for ignoring international guidelines aimed at preventing obesity and chronic diseases after campaigners found it has been adding sugar and honey to infant milk and cereal products sold in poorer countries, including South Africa.

Public Eye, a Swiss investigative organisation, sent samples of the Swiss multinational's baby-food products sold in Africa, Asia and Latin America to a Belgian laboratory for testing, where tests found added sugar in the form of sucrose or honey in samples of **Nido**, a follow-up milk formula brand intended for use for infants aged one and above, and **Cerelac**, a cereal aimed at children aged between six months and two years.

How do we counteract this influence

- Mobilise our health professional associations to adopt, publicize and implement strong conflict of interest policies (position statements) to impede corporate influence

THE LANCET

Call to end sponsorship from commercial milk formula companies

**Iona Macnab, Daniela Drandić,
Ann Kellams, Iqbal Ahmad Memon,
Alex Stevenson, Karen Walker
ionamacnab@ilca.org*

International Lactation Consultant Association,
Melbourne, VIC 3187, Australia (IM); International
Confederation of Midwives, Rovinj, Croatia (DD);
Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine, Charlottesville,
VA, USA (AK); Asia Pacific Pediatric Association,
Karachi, Pakistan (IAM); African Neonatal Association,
Harare, Zimbabwe (AS); Council of International
Neonatal Nurses, Sydney, NSW, Australia (KW)

Examples of action

[Home](#) | [News and events](#) | [News](#)

RCPCH statement on relationship with formula milk companies

13 February 2019

[Media & Public Affairs team](#)

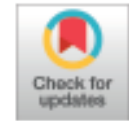
RCPCH Council has made the decision to no longer accept any funding from formula milk companies.

Examples of action



BMJ 2019;364:l1200 doi: 10.1136/bmj.l1200 (Published 18 March 2019)

Page 1 of 2



EDITORIALS

Calling time on formula milk adverts

The BMJ and our sister journals will no longer carry ads for breastmilk substitutes

Examples of action



Department of Paediatrics and Child Health

[Home](#) [Health Sciences](#)



Eliminating conflict of interest

The International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes (1981) and local Regulation 991 (2012) aim to promote and protect breastfeeding by removing commercial pressures from the infant feeding arena. This includes strict guidelines around industry sponsorship of conferences and scientific meetings, to “ensure that financial support for professionals working in infant and young child health does not create conflicts of interest”[6].

Over the past five years, the Advocacy Committee has documented repeated transgressions of R991 at the Department’s annual Paediatric Refresher Course. Following the lead of the British Medical Journal and Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health the Committee has called on local academic departments and professional associations to eliminate the inherent conflict of interest with funding from formula milk companies. We are working with the National Department of Health to strengthen reporting mechanisms Regulation 991.

- [WHO Webinar: The problem with the formula milk industry: An unhealthy influence on health professionals? 8 September 2022](#)
- [Departmental position statement](#)

Examples of action



HOME

ABOUT USANA

MEMBERSHIP

MEDIA

WEBINARS

NEWS

UPCOM

Publications

[Position Statement on Relations between Commercial Milk Formula \(CMF\) Companies and the United South African Neonatal Association \(USANA\)](#)



Sponsorship Guidelines

Further to the process outlined above, ADSA will not allow companies who manufacture designated products as defined by R.991 (namely infant formula, follow-up formula, infant or follow-up formula for special dietary management of infants with special medical conditions, complementary foods, liquid milks, powdered milks, modified powdered milks or powdered drinks marketed or otherwise represented as suitable for infants and young children, feeding bottles, teats and feeding cups with spouts, straws or teats) to be National Sponsors, irrespective of the company's risk and opportunity score.

Clarification on Sponsorship of Health Professional and Scientific Meetings by Companies that Market Foods for Infants and Young Children: Information Note (WHO & UNICEF, 2023)

- “The WHO *Guidance on Ending the Inappropriate Promotion of Foods for Infants and Young Children* calls on **governments to end sponsorship of meetings of health professionals and scientific meetings by companies that market foods for infants and young children**, including formula milks for children up to 36 months. Therefore, companies that market these products should not be allowed to sponsor health professional or scientific meetings or events, regardless of what other products that company may also market. Professional and scientific associations or organisations who organise or host these events (including their representatives) should neither solicit nor accept sponsorship from companies that market foods for infants and children, including formula milks for children up to 36 months.”
- “In addition to providing funds to support the general operation of a meeting, conference or educational event, the activities listed below are also examples of sponsorship:
 - Provision of in-kind support for specific activities of a conference.
 - Advertisements of any company, brand, or product.
 - Sponsorship of sessions or side-sessions.
 - Financial support or aid, scholarships, awards, or grants.
 - Exhibition space.

Conclusions

- Despite a decade since R991, formula milk marketing to health professionals remains widespread and aggressive.
- Health professionals have personal access to pregnant women and parents of young children, and a trusted role in providing evidence-based, independent, impartial advice
- Systematic marketing by formula milk companies seeks to influence health professionals' understanding of breastfeeding, to convince them of the need for formula, and to use them as channels for marketing.

Acknowledgements

- Dr Katie Pereira-Kotze (UWC)

The evidence is strong. Formula milk marketing, not the product itself, disrupts informed decision-making and undermines breastfeeding and child health.

THANK YOU



MARKETING
\$55bn
FORMULA MILK
INDUSTRY