

LOGO



GENERAL INFORMATION

Medela is a Swiss company founded in 1961, with 18 subsidiaries in Europe, North America and Asia. As a leading manufacturer of breast pumps, it describes itself as a research-based company. In 2008, Medela started making and promoting, the **Calma** teat. That landed it into the league of Code violators. Medela began using new language to “stretch the rules” and get around the scope of the Code, promoting the Calma teat as a “feeding device”, and calling the feeding bottles attached to their pumps “storage systems”.

Another area of concern that has developed since BTR 2014 is Medela’s sponsorship of public health research programmes such as the Breastfeeding Friendly Country Index Project in 2015, through the Family Larsson-Rosenquist Foundation of Zug, Switzerland which the company is affiliated to. Riding on a partnership with the academically-acclaimed Yale School of Public Health, the project aims to measure effectiveness of breastfeeding promotion programmes around the world. The Index only focuses on exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months, disregarding the WHO recommendation of continued breastfeeding until two years or beyond. Medela is also involved in other research activities through the Foundation’s sponsorship of a professorship for human lactation research at Zurich University. Neither announcement on the Zurich nor the Yale sponsorship mentioned the Foundation’s vested interest in Medela.

Several WHA Resolutions, including WHA 49.15 [1996], WHA 58.32 [2005] and WHA 65.50 [2012] call upon countries to establish mechanisms to

safeguard against conflicts of interest in infant and young child nutrition which the research projects may propagate.

PROMOTION TO THE PUBLIC

■ France

A promotion in the *Bébé au Sein* magazine for its **Calma** teat (and a double pumping breast pump), claims the teat allows the baby to use the same suction movement and the same muscles as on the breast, implying that it will return more easily to the breast.



VIOLATION

Confusing mothers by leading them on to think switching back and forth between breast and bottle is acceptable when it is in fact a practice that usually means the end of breastfeeding.

■ Hong Kong

The Medela Hong Kong Facebook page shows a large promotional stall at a baby expo, complete with discounts for their feeding bottles and teats and free gifts of baby products with a purchase.



VIOLATION

Giving out free feeding bottles and teats promoted as storage devices for breastmilk is a deliberate attempt to circumvent the Code’s restrictions.

■ South Africa

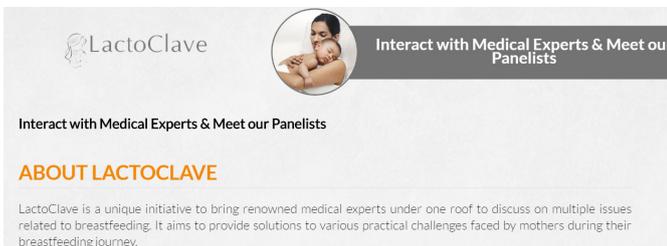
The Medela booth at the first South African Breastfeeding and Lactation Symposium was a platform for the promotion of its feeding bottle and teats.



A selection of Medela feeding bottles and teats on display at the symposium with an attractive backdrop to idealise the products.

■ India

Medela has created the LactoClave initiative, which involves bringing ‘medical experts’ to discuss breastfeeding. The initiative also features a ‘LactoCafé’ where mothers can video chat with experts and midwives. Health workers’ fiduciary duty is to protect breastfeeding, initiatives such as these are fraught with conflicts of interest.



Under the guise of promoting breastfeeding, health workers have become representatives of the company, aiding contact with mothers. Their participation equals endorsement of the company.

Human rights violator or supporter

Apart from being involved in breastfeeding research through its affiliated foundation, something breastfeeding advocates view with alarm, Medela was also a sponsor of the Human Rights in Childbirth India Conference. UNICEF and the Committee on the Convention of the Rights of the Child considers Code violator to be a human rights violator so Medela is obviously trying to spruce up its image through some whitewashing. On the conference website, data from breastfeeding research conducted by Medela in India was also cited, so it is one for gaining legitimacy among breastfeeding advocates for some much needed goodwill.



Human Rights in Childbirth India Conference 2017

The blog is produced from the collaboration of the organisations HRIC and Birth India, as well as other passionate

Medela, a sponsor of the upcoming Human Rights in Childbirth Conference, articulates the need of infants to breastfeed.



Paying lip-service to breastfeeding while violating the Code is certainly not considered to be exemplary behaviour by human rights advocates.

POSTS LIKES FOLLOWING ARCHIVE

strengthens the child's immunity and helps the baby to grow at the adapted rate. According to WHO, new-borns must be ideally breastfed for more than a period of six months for their healthy growth and a more strengthened immune system, the first six months being exclusive breastfeeding (no water, no other liquid nor solids).

The quintessential concern of a new lactating mother is to establish the first hour contact with her baby. This early hour breastfeeding is the first source of nutrition for the child. Generally, women are not aware of this first hour breastfeeding and tend to throw away the colostrum. Colostrum, the first milk, thick, sticky, yellow or orange liquid, has a large number of important nutrients and is actually essential for a new-born.

According to a survey conducted by Medela on breastfeeding trends in India, 32.4% of women start breastfeeding within the first hour in Delhi NCR. There have been two major myths associated with the culture. First that of pre-lactal feeds (mixture of honey and ghee to new-borns for energy and easier acceptance of feeds) is better, whereas they actually lead to infection and delays the initiation of breastfeeding. And second that destroying the first

Double-dipping in conflicts of interest – justifying conference sponsorship with sponsored research data on breastfeeding.