Management class

Case Merck and River Blindness Q: How did Merck act BOTH responsibly and irresponsibly in deciding to go ahead with the development of the drug to treat onchocerciasis?

Thesis Statement:

“ The Controversy of Merck’s Success in Developing Mectizan® on Behalf of Using Animals on Laboratory Experiments”

Multi-point Argument on Thesis Statement: Pros of the Issue

Merck has been successful in developing a medicine that could cure ‘ river blindness’ or onchocerciasis. I strongly agree that Merck should be given a tribute for discovering a new drug that could a parasite called Onchocerca volvulus. (Remme, 2004)

Multi-point Argument on Thesis Statement: Cons of the Issue

Based on the Animal Bill of Rights, animals should be “ free from exploitation, cruelty, neglect and abuse while the laboratory animals are not supposed to be used in cruel or unnecessary experiments.” (ALDF, 2007) Therefore, animals should not be used in laboratory experiments particularly on testing new drugs.

Conclusion

It is good that the people behind Merck have contributed a lot of their time and effort in searching for an effective drug that could treat onchocerciasis. Without the researchers and innovators behind Merck, a lot of less fortunate African people that lives in nearby rivers and works in the farm would still suffer from the said epidemic disease. Many of them would still go through the process of losing their eyesight and develop some uncontrollable itching, swelling, and thickening of the skin. (Salaam, 2002)

If only Merck uses alternative methods such as ‘ microdosing’ in new drugs

experiments (Rowland, 2006) instead of using animals on their experiment, the result of the company's success in developing Mectizan® would have been so much better for all of us.

Case # 2: Merck and Vioxx

Q: How appropriately did Merck act in regard to its promotion of Vioxx?

Thesis Statement: 25 words or less/ summary sentence

" The Fallacy Behind the Marketing Promotion of Vioxx®"

Multi-point Argument on Thesis Statement

When Vioxx® was subjected to pre-clinical and clinical data, the drug was found out to have side effects particularly on gastrointestinal, cardiovascular, and renal safety of the users. (Martin, 2006a) Despite knowing the harmful effects of Vioxx®, the company decided to continue the selling of the drugs. In fact, the company collaborated with the FDA not to include the NSAID-class gastrointestinal warning on its label but instead, to modify it. (Martin, 2006a)

As early as 1997, questions about the cardiovascular safety of Vioxx® have been raised. (Martin, 2006b) Since Merck has modified the warning label on Vioxx®, a lot of consumers were not provided with a more solid warning with regards to the use of the product. It was only in September 30, 2004 when the company formally declared the voluntary worldwide withdrawal of Vioxx® from the market. (Kim, n. d.) Approximately four years after a numerous incidence of cardiovascular problems and a lawsuit against Merck were reported to be cause by the use of the drug. (CNN Money, 2004; Berenson, 2005)

Pros and Cons of the Issue

This issue becomes an eye opener to the people with regards to drug safety

precautions. However, many people have already suffered to the extent of causing death to some users.

Conclusion

It is advisable for consumers to study carefully the possible side effects of the drugs they are planning to intake. Promotion of drugs can be misleading sometimes to the extent of causing harm and death to its consumers.

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