NFTHD #11: Podcasts

In this Notes from the Code Help Desk, we discuss how the Code views the provision of textbooks to healthcare professionals.

The delivery of information to audiences through audio-only channels is not new. We have delivered cassette tapes and CDs to our audiences for education during the commute, and we have provided content in electronic forms (MP3s anyone?). The term 'podcast' is simply a new name for the delivery of audio-only content to an audience.

There are a number of third-party education suppliers which offer podcasts as a new educational option for company sponsorship. These should be approached in the same way as any other educational activity:

- Companies need to determine their level of involvement in the content: from sponsor to creator. If it is simply a sponsorship with no creative input from the company, then the company should have no need to review the finished product or have responsibility for the output.
- If the company proposes the topic, identifies speakers, provides references or content, and has any editorial control - then the company needs to be confident that the output is fully compliant with the Code.

Ultimately, audio-only content is a great way of sharing educational information with a time-poor audience. Unlike a voice-over PowerPoint / video content, companies cannot rely on images to convey additional information. Therefore, the information needs to be more comprehensive, and the context needs to be provided verbally (think study design, or qualifiers usually seen on screen).

Companies could also consider what information can be provided alongside the podcast - anyone who's listened to a podcast has heard the words "more information in the show notes". Podcasts still have to remain balanced, accurate, and scientifically valid.