



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	251/99
2. Advertiser	Glaxo Wellcome Aust Ltd (Influenza)
3. Product	Health Products
4. Type of advertisement	Print
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Other – section 2.1
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 10 August 1999
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The print advertisement is headed ‘You’re more likely to go to bed with the one on the right’ and contains photographs of two women, the one on the left being well dressed and attractive and captioned ‘The common cold’; the one on the right being larger, severely dressed, with a stern expression and captioned ‘Influenza’. Between the two photographs is a text box containing information explaining the distinction between the common cold and influenza, and the benefits of consulting a doctor without delay. It also includes such comments as ‘The flu is an altogether different beast ... a cruel mistress ... of all the things in all the world you’d want to cuddle up with in bed, influenza is not one of them’.

THE COMPLAINT

Comments that the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

“I strongly object to the depiction of women in this manner – young, attractive, sexy; older, unattractive, cruel mistress.”

“It demeans and discriminates against people with heavier and larger body shapes. By inference, it teaches that a certain body shape is undesirable, ugly and associates this with a stern and harsh demeanour, while the demeanour of the person with the ‘correct’ body shape is relaxed and friendly.”

“Expressions like ‘the brute force’, ‘different beast’ and ‘cruel mistress’ are used to draw a parallel between women and viruses, thereby portraying women in a negative, violent and offensive way.”

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board (‘the Board’) considered whether this advertisement breached Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (‘the Code’).

While appreciating the personal viewpoints expressed by the complainant/s, the Board determined that the portrayal of the women within the advertisement was not such as to constitute discrimination or vilification. The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach the Code on this or any other ground and, accordingly, dismissed the complaint.