



## **CASE REPORT**

1. Complaint reference number	253/99
2. Advertiser	Glaxo Wellcome Aust Ltd (Influenza)
3. Product	Health Products
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Other – section 2.1 Violence Other – section 2.2
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 10 August 1999
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT**

The television advertisement shows a man working at an office desk, as a voiceover says ‘There’s your common cold ...’. An attractive woman enters the office and slaps the man across the face. The voiceover continues ‘... and then there’s the flu’ as a larger, stern faced woman enters the office and slaps the man several times, punches him in the face, places him in a headlock, twists his nose and stamps on his chest knocking him to the floor. During this, voiceover says ‘The flu is a harsh mistress ... knocks you flat within hours, leaving you feverish and drained with aches all over ... if you can’t afford to be out of action, influenza can now be treated, so see your doctor as soon as it hits’.

## **THE COMPLAINT**

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

*“... the portrayal of women, in particular, of certain physical stereotypes as metaphors for disease is abysmal in a society which has made significant gains towards gender equality ...”*

*“The ad portrays unprovoked violence, which is not a message that is helpful to the healthy growth of community members who are already struggling to find good role models and reduce domestic violence and workplace harassment.”*

*“Isn’t it time these stereotypes were squashed ... why is this type of chauvinism permitted?”*

## **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 also noted that the actions of the women, particularly the ‘influenza’ character, were presented in an exaggerated and clearly fictitious manner. The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach the Code on this or any other ground and, accordingly, dismissed the complaint.