



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	258/09
2. Advertiser	Pfizer
3. Product	Health Products
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Portrayal of sex/sexuality/nudity – section 2.3
6. Date of determination	Wednesday, 24 June 2009
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This TVC has the soundtrack to the song “the things we do for love.” The theme of the commercial depicts the life of a couple from first courtship to current day, with changes in style, fashion and clothing being consistent with the journey through life.

The opening scene is a restaurant where the young woman orders lobster and the man “chokes” on the order. Second image is of the couple sitting on a park bench and her dog is chewing on the man’s sleeve. Third image is of the couple, holding hands, chained to a tree, to protecting it from loggers.

Voice over says “You used to do everything for your lovelife. What’s stopping you now? Don’t let erection problems get in the way. The image of the man now in current day looking at a picture in his wallet of the couple when they were chained to the tree. Voice over “See your GP for real help or visit thingswedoforlove.com.au “. The man is depicted being shown into the Doctor's surgery.

THE COMPLAINT

A sample of comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

I feel that this ad is walking a fine line on the restriction on advertising prescription drug on Australian television. In the general public I imagine there is a strong knowledge of the association between Pfizer and the drug Viagra, especially in the demographic the ad is aimed at. While not specifically advertising the product the brand is synonymous with the brand. It would be like banning junk food commercials aimed at children’s time slots and running an ad only featuring Ronald McDonald and claiming it was not about food or McDonalds.

I don't like having to explain to my young children what erection problems are. Do they need to advertise the word erection in the ad. Should it be shown at 5.30pm on a Sunday that kids watch?

THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complaint/s regarding this advertisement included the following:

Pfizer Australia takes this matter very seriously and welcomes the opportunity to comment on the complaint.

The primary objective of the “things we do for love” campaign is to raise awareness among older males of erectile dysfunction, and to encourage those who experience it to visit their GP to discuss the matter further. We are cognisant that when raising a sensitive issue, such as erectile dysfunction, with a key demographic consisting of older men, this must be done in a careful and sensitive manner. Taking into consideration the sensitive nature of the topic, and given the

difficulty in reaching an all male television audience, the strategy was to run advertisements around programs with a higher ratio of male (to female) viewers; mitigating the likelihood of the advertisement's exposure to a wide audience.

Pfizer believes that the advertisement is compliant with Section 2.3 of the Australian Association of National Advertisers Code of Ethics by treating the subject matter with sensitivity to the audience and the time zone. The advertisement portrays the various difficult situations men go through "for love" and likens this to the perceived difficult situation of consulting a GP about erection problems. By highlighting the things we do for love instead of focusing on sex, and by avoiding any explicit illustrations of sexual activity, the advertisement puts the onus on love and romance, thereby treating the topic with sensitivity. The choice of the word "erection", rather than a more colloquial expression, was to keep the focus on the issue itself, rather than trying to dilute the message through humour.

With the above in mind, the advertisement "things we do for love" received a PG rating by the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice. In light of this, and in addition to the choice of script and visuals, the advertisement treats the topic of sexuality with sensitivity to the adult audience through its placement in the following PG rated timeslots; Monday to Friday 8.30am – 4 pm and 7pm – 6am, and weekends from 10am to 6am. Pfizer submits that it has complied with the Industry Code in every respect.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this complaint. As previously stated, Pfizer Australia takes this complaint very seriously and as such I would be pleased to discuss this further should The Advertising Standards Board require clarification on any matters in assessing the merits of this complaint.

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board ("Board") considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the "Code").

The Board noted the complainants' concern about mention of erection problems and also about the validity of advertising prescription products.

The Board noted that the issue of whether or not particular prescription products are able to be advertised is an issue for the Medicines Australia Code of Conduct and the relevant complaints committee. The Board's concern is the content of the advertisement.

The Board noted that the advertisement recommends that people seek advice from a Doctor for erection problems. The Board considered that the advertisement was tasteful, treated the issue of sexual dysfunction sensitively and presented the issue in the context of a number of humorous situations during the course of a relationship. The Board noted that the advertisement is restricted to PG timezones. The Board considered that the advertisement did treat the issue of sex with sensitivity to the relevant audience and that it did not breach section 2.3 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on other grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.