



## CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number 288/09
2. Advertiser Hasbro Australia Ltd
3. Product Toys & Games
4. Type of advertisement TV
5. Nature of complaint Advertising to Children Code - Factual presentation – section 2.4
6. Date of determination Wednesday, 8 July 2009
7. DETERMINATION Dismissed

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement for a Better Now Baby Doll opens with an animated cartoon baby doll waving at the camera and then sneezing. Two young girls are shown discussing the “baby’s” first cold and one of the girls says that she has everything she needs to make the “baby” feel better. The girl is shown comforting the doll, taking its temperature, administering medicine by nose and mouth and changing its nappy. At the end of the advertisement, the doll is shown sitting amongst the products used to “treat” her and an animated cartoon doll is shown laughing and dancing next to the words “Baby Alive.com”.

## THE COMPLAINT

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

*The add infers medicine makes you happy. (Not well)*

*Some of our most lethal illegal drugs are taken through the nose.*

*Kids are too young for medicine to be OK to give out or take by themselves. (I know this is a doll but it's the message).*

*Perhaps if the thermo. showed RED for Hot and Blue for cold I may not feel as strongly as I do. RED is universal for HOT or Danger, Blue is the same for Cool/ cold.*

## THE ADVERTISER’S RESPONSE

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

*In this instance there has been a misinterpretation of the product features portrayed in the commercial which has brought about the concerns of the complainant.*

*Medicine is depicted being given via the spoon only the reference in the complaint to nose medication is actually referring to a nasal aspirator, used to clear a baby's nose, NOT to administer medicine. This is clear in the spot by referring to help the doll "breathe easier" by clearing the nose with the aspirator. Further to the medicine issue, a significant proportion of medicine given to young children is in liquid form and given via a spoon or similar. In the context the commercial accurately depicts the giving of medicine to an unwell child and not the taking of illegal drugs through the nose.*

*As for the thermometer, we use these icons (the bear etc) throughout the Baby Alive line and these are a key way for us to differentiate Baby Alive from knockoff brands. Happy and sad are base emotions that all children understand and make it easier for children to understand the concept of feeling unwell versus feeling well as well as making the connection between having a temperature*

*and feeling unwell.*

*In terms of the child administering medicine to her doll, this is a role play situation where the girl is "playing mummy". This is giving the message that it's appropriate for the mother to give the child medicine as opposed to the child giving themselves or their peers medicine. By them partaking in this role play it actually reinforces the message that "mummy" or an adult should only give medicine to children and they should not take it on their own.*

*In the detail described above, this commercial complies with the AANA Code for Advertising and Marketing Communications to children, specially section 2.1 as raised by the complainant.*

## **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 complainant's concern that the advertisement will suggest to children that taking medicine will make them feel good.

The Board considered that this advertisement is directed to children and is for a product targeted towards and having principal appeal to children and that therefore the AANA Code for Advertising and Marketing Communications to Children applies.

The Board considered whether the product complies with section 2.5 of the Code. Section 2.5 states that advertisements "must not ...depict unsafe uses of a product or unsafe situations which may encourage children to engage in dangerous activities or create unrealistic impressions in the minds of children...about safety."

The Board considered that the advertisement depicts a product which will enable a child to role play being a mother and looking after a sick baby. The Board considered that the administration of 'medicine' and an 'aspirator' were not uncommon scenes in a home for a child and would be associated with helping a sick child feel better. The Board considered that the depiction of the use of these products was consistent with their safe use in real life. The Board considered that the advertisement would be unlikely to suggest to a child that taking medicine in situations other than where sick was necessary or appropriate. The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach section 2.5 of the Children's Code.

The Board also considered the depiction in an advertisement to children of a child administering medicine and whether this contravened prevailing community standards on health and safety. The Board considered that the advertisement clearly depicts a child administering 'toy' medicine to a doll and that this is not a representation likely of itself to lead a young child to inappropriate copy cat behaviour on younger siblings or pets.

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