

LETTERS

OPENING UP DATA AT THE EMA

EMA urgently needs a cureAlain Braillon *public health*

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The *BMJ* has dared to report that the European Medicines Agency (EMA) seems more interested in protecting the secrets of Big Pharma than in protecting the health of the European people.^{1 2}

For too long the EMA has deliberately and cynically impeded access to information. *Prescrire*, the famous independent drug bulletin, was first refused access to the scientific analysis of rimonabant by the EMA. After a second request and a long delay the EMA eventually sent a document, but only two of the 68 pages were readable.³

Moreover, the European Parliament has just produced a damning report on the EMA's budget management and its handling of conflicts of interest.⁴ Six hundred and twenty six of the 700 members of the European Parliament voted to postpone the

closure of the EMA's 2009 accounts until an audit of the agency is produced. The EMA has been given until the end of June 2011 to produce the information requested.

Competing interests: None declared.

- 1 Gotzsche PC, Jørgensen AW. Opening up data at the European Medicines Agency. *BMJ* 2011;342:d2686. (10 May.)
- 2 Barbui C, Baschiroto C, Cipriani A. EMA must improve the quality of its clinical trial reports. *BMJ* 2011;342:d2291.
- 3 Editorial. *Prescrire* 2009;29:537. www.prescrire.org/editeuriaux/EDI33693.pdf.
- 4 European Parliament. Proposal on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Medicines Agency for the financial year 2009 (C7-0233/2010–2010/2173(DEC)). 2011. www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A7-2011-0153&language=EN.

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