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## Ethical issues in pharmaceutical electronic detailing (e-detailing)

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Electronic detailing (e-detailing) has been introduced in the last few years by the pharmaceutical industry as a new communication channel to promote pharmaceutical products to physicians. E-detailing means using digital technology: internet, video conferencing and interactive voice response. There are two types of e-detailing: interactive (virtual) and video. Currently, little is known about what factors influence physicians' adoption of e-detailing. Studies show that e-detailing has become more influential on physicians' prescribing behaviors than pharmaceutical sales representatives visits. Many academic and hospital-based practice institutions follow a policy to restrict using e-detailing in their institutions because the information conveyed is selective and may be biased for their product. Other studies have shown that using e-detailing influence requests to add new medications to hospital formularies, increasing the cost of prescribing. Because of the influence of e-detailing on physician prescribing behavior and the varying frequency of adopting e-detailing among physicians, it is important to investigate those factors that influence physicians' decisions to adopt e-detailing. Moreover, we need to investigate the emerging ethical dilemmas and policy issues in using e-detailing among physicians. The lack of research about these factors results in a lack of clear guidance for policymakers to effectively manage e-detailing.

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