

Anne Foulliard vs. Globe and Mail

A complainant who was featured in an article on exercise and living with arthritis alleges the Globe and Mail misled her about the intent of the article.

Anne Foulliard objected to the placement of a large ad for pain medication near the story about her experience living with arthritis. The medication company was the series sponsor. The complainant said the placement made it look like an advocate for the medication.

Correspondence between the paper and the complainant indicated the complainant was aware that her story was part of a sponsored content package. The story was not altered to support the advertiser.

The NNC notes that placement of articles near advertising is not a breach of ethics or of acceptable editorial practices. This, and the communications between the paper and Ms. Fouillard, have satisfied the Council that the complaint should be dismissed.

However, Council notes the ad in the print article was far more prominent than in the web article offered as an example for the complainant to review. The link offered was not a fair example in this case. It also appears the complainant was not informed that her story would appear in print and so there was no explicit agreement with the complainant for use of her story in the sponsored content print version. In light of this, Council strongly recommends that in future dealings with subjects of sponsored content, the paper must be more forthcoming about proximity of advertising and story placement, and about the platforms, whether print or digital, where the story may appear.

Article: "If you have arthritis, exercise is your best friend"

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