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## Medical representative visits and opinion leaders: means of information and promotion for the pharmaceutical industry

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Medical representative visits (MRVs) are a means of information and a pharmaceutical strategy that is becoming less common, particularly visits involving generalists, all around Europe. In France, MRVs still remain a predominant pharmaceutical means of information about drugs for physicians, but increasingly the recommendations of drug regulatory authorities are to use representatives of health insurance and to participate in continuing medical education (CME). One of the results of our qualitative study in French-speaking Switzerland is that MRVs are deliberately very limited by generalists but still continue for specialists; participation in CME events is mandatory. Opinion leaders (OLs) are a means of information for physicians and a pharmaceutical strategy that is having an increasing impact. OLs interventions take place during CME events and conferences. The very concept of OLs needs to be clarified. A typology of OLs which was based on the international medical literature has been conducted, in order better to understand their roles and their increasing impacts as a means of information for physicians as well as a strategy for the pharmaceutical industry.

### Biography

Anne-Laure Pittet completed her PhD in Life Sciences from the University of Lausanne (Switzerland). She completed a Master of Advanced Studies (MAS) in Business Management at the University of Geneva (Switzerland). She is currently an Associate Researcher at the University Institute of the History of Medicine and Public Health (IUHMSP), Lausanne, Switzerland. Her main topic of interest is the interactions between the physicians, the pharmaceutical industry and the health authorities.

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