

One: Leading proponents as well as critics of the UGDP study should meet for the purpose of issuing a joint statement in which the primacy of diet and the obvious need for restriction in the use of oral hypoglycemic agents is clearly spelled out.

Mr. GORDON. What kind of a joint statement?

To whom would it be directed?

Dr. FELIG. I think we have witnessed, now, for the last 5 years, since the report of the UGDP study, that physicians who had been very critical of this have tended to band together and release statements as the Committee for the Care of the Diabetic Patient, et cetera. This group, I think, would be one which is so clearly identified as critical of the UGDP, that I would hope they would be part of a joint statement together with other individuals who have been proponents of the UGDP, or who have not attacked it, so as to come to some joint statement regarding the overall situations in which these agents should be prescribed.

It is interesting that in the criticism of the UGDP, the severe critics do not generally raise an argument as to the situations in which the drug is indicated, but restrict their argument to the question of whether there is absolutely incontrovertible data that these agents will be harmful. They should in fact be addressing themselves to the facts before us; namely, that we have a situation in this country in which a potentially toxic drug is being widely overprescribed. If one assumes to be, or in any way is willing to be called an expert in the field, he has a responsibility which goes with that designation; namely, to influence the prescribing habits and over-all practice of medicine by his colleagues. I think this is where the field of diabetes has been remiss, and in particular those who have been critical of the UGDP. They have failed, as I think all medicine has failed, to rectify a situation which all agree is not optimal from the standpoint of the patient.

Mr. GORDON. When Dr. Bradley testified here, he acknowledged that these drugs are vastly overused. I do not know whether he used the word vastly, but I am putting that in.

Nevertheless, it appears that in his attacks on the UGDP study, he is essentially promoting the use of these drugs.

Is that a correct conclusion from what you have stated?

Dr. FELIG. I would think that any group or statement that tends to accentuate the criticism of the UGDP and is not accompanied at the same time at least by an equally forcible statement indicating that these drugs are overprescribed, will have the effect of perpetuating the use of the agents; or, probably more likely, they would promote their utilization.

So, it becomes very difficult to divorce comments from such critics of the UGDP from an effect which is very similar to that which would occur with a drug promotional type of statement.

Mr. GORDON. I conclude from what you state—and I ask you if this is a valid conclusion—that it is really the responsibility of the critics of the UGDP to insure that there is some rectification in prescribing habits of physicians today.

Dr. FELIG. I think it is the responsibility of all experts in the field. That responsibility becomes that much more manifest and incumbent