

COMPETITIVE PROBLEMS IN THE DRUG INDUSTRY 13647

1. That the conclusions of the UGDP study are not accepted by some eminent authorities on diabetes mellitus.

2. That education of physicians lags well behind the knowledge developed through research. Unfortunately drug company literature provides the major source of information for many physicians.

3. The lack of adequate patient education in their understanding of diabetes and the hazards of oral hypoglycemic agents.

4. The failure adequately to impress the patients with sufficient understanding of the importance of a calculated isocaloric diet and their failure to comply in this respect.

5. The ease of using oral medication compared with the injection of insulin.

The UGDP study clearly demonstrated that standard doses of oral hypoglycemic agents did not effectively reduce levels of blood sugar over a 5 year period. These data confirmed previous studies which disclosed that the success rate in managing diabetes with tolbutamide at the end of 5 years was only 13% (DeLawter and Moss, J.A.M.A., 181, 1962, 156). Relapse or secondary failure is recorded as 22% within 5 years (Camerine-Davalos and Marble, J.A.M.A., 181, 1962, 1). Six to seven years after therapy with oral hypoglycemic agents only 6-12% remain well controlled. (A.M.A. Drug Evaluations, Publishing Sciences Group Inc., 2nd Edition, 1973, p. 130, Alton, Massachusetts). Yet despite the ineffectiveness of these hypoglycemic agents and their demonstrated relationship to increased mortality from cardiovascular disease, these drugs are still widely used in the treatment of maturity onset diabetes. I have noted previously the reasons for the failure on the part of physicians and patients to heed the warning of the hazards and ineffectiveness of this group of drugs.