

COMPETITIVE PROBLEMS IN THE DRUG INDUSTRY 13671

The UGDP was set up to determine whether various treatments for diabetes would minimize the mainly vascular complications that notoriously accompany that disease. It is ironic that a full report dealing with complications has not yet been published because, in the third and fourth years of the study, an alarming preponderance of deaths had accumulated in the tolbutamide group. The investigators, then, perforce, had to turn their attention to mortality and survival.

I was not a participant of the UGDP study, but I followed it closely. Despite some imperfections, I think that the results and conclusion of the UGDP have shown tolbutamide and phenformin, and probably their cousins, to be dangerous drugs, especially when taken for extended periods of time. I stand by my opinion of four years ago, expressed with the help of a committee of the American Diabetes Association in the editorial statement accompanying the first report of the UGDP (Diabetes, Supplement No. 2, Vol.19:747-830, 1970). I quote:

"...The UGDP mortality study shows that death rates were essentially the same in the IVAR group, which maintained more nearly normal fasting blood glucose levels, as in the more poorly controlled groups of PLBO and ISTD. This would appear to mean that efforts