

[At which time a tape recording was heard.]

Dr. CROUT. I wanted to spend a little time today so that you get the flavor of what is in the hour the physician puts in.

As you will see, the tape begins by mentioning that there are 4 to 8 million people with depression, and that the tape is sponsored by the American Psychiatric Association and financed by Pfizer.

A series of scenes then suggested that depression is far more pervasive than one might have suspected. First an estimate of 20 million people per year is proposed as a more probable alternative to the 4 to 8 million figure. Depression is broadly defined as "the absence of joy, anhedonia" and various examples illustrate its ravages: The housewife, the underachiever, people with psychosomatic complaints, insomnia, or sexual dysfunction. The increase in recent years of the use of tricyclic antidepressants is noted and is accounted praiseworthy. Finally, the last speaker of the symposium suggests that tricyclic antidepressants are particularly good drugs and indicates certain advantages that Sinequan, Pfizer's tricyclic, has.

The message is quite clear:

Depression is everywhere and being underdiagnosed.

Patients need not be actually depressed—insufficient joy, psychosomatic complaints, or underachieving, may be the only signs or symptoms and may be enough to make a diagnosis of depression.

Sinequan is the best of a good group of drugs, whose use, fortunately for the American public, is finally increasing to high levels.

The physician should join this welcome trend and use the drugs more.

There is every reason to believe that the physicians participating in the taped discussion are voicing with full personal integrity, their best medical opinions. It is also likely, however, that the drug firm knew what each physician would say before they invited him and thus assured the emergence of a particular point of view in its educational production.

Audio cassette tapes come to physicians in ever-increasing numbers. They are particularly useful to the physician because they allow him to make use of time that ordinarily is lost while driving in his car.

I would like to play for you an excerpt from a February 1976 tape from the American Osteopathic Association audio educational service, sponsored by Abbott Laboratories; the speaker is an osteopathic physician interviewed for this particular program.

Senator NELSON. May I ask a question before you proceed. Your statement earlier suggested that certain drugs—your example was hypertension, not depression—were underprescribed.

Dr. CROUT. Yes.

Senator NELSON. With respect to the question of underprescribing, I take it that that was what the panel was saying of drugs for depression. I assume that the specialty best qualified to diagnose the problem of depression is the field of psychiatry.

Dr. CROUT. Yes.

Senator NELSON. Would it also have indicated that there are not very many psychiatrists, and that not very many people get to visit a psychiatrist as compared with other physicians.