

14706 COMPETITIVE PROBLEMS IN THE DRUG INDUSTRY

Because of his willingness to use himself as a human guinea pig, Alles not only discovered very quickly that amphetamine was active whether inhaled or taken orally, but he also found that "Benzedrine" was surpassed by its dextro (right-handed) isomer (eventually marketed as "Dexedrine" or dextro-amphetamine) in its ability to alleviate fatigue, increase or intensify his alertness, and make him feel euphorically confident even when it kept him awake long into the night.

In some way F. P. Nabenhauer, the chief chemist at the drug house of Smith, Kline & French, found out about Alles' work, and began to experiment with various commercial applications of amphetamine in conjunction with his firm's patented inhaling device. The executives at Smith, Kline & French realized the potential bonanza this "new" class of synthetic "ephedrine substitute" represented, and persuaded Alles to sell them all his patent rights. In 1932 their "Benzedrine" inhaler was first made available to the public by non-prescription, over-the-counter sale in drug stores across the country. The American Medical Association gave this new drug the generic name "amphetamine," and in a mild parenthetical warning note, it cautioned that "continued over-dosage" might cause "restlessness and sleeplessness," but assured physicians that "no serious reactions have been observed." In late 1937 the American Medical Association approved the new drug in tablet form recognizing it as an acceptable therapeutic medication for the treatment of narcolepsy and also post-encephalitic parkinsonism. The American Medical Association further stated that "Benzedrine" was "useful" in the treatment of "certain depressive psychopathic conditions," and even that persons "under the strict supervision of a physician" could take amphetamine in order to capture "a sense of increased energy or capacity for work, or a feeling of ex-