

14710 COMPETITIVE PROBLEMS IN THE DRUG INDUSTRY

amphetamine. This left a major loophole that was seized upon by a number of the drug houses; in fact, one small Midwest drug house began to market its "Valo" inhaler, containing 150 mg of methamphetamine after the Food and Drug Administration ban had gone into effect. The ultimate inhaler abuse -- intravenous injection of the contents -- was first reported in 1959, and was soon fairly widespread. As late as March of 1970, B. M. Angrist and his co-workers reported four cases of amphetamine psychosis resulting from abuse of the "Wyamine" inhaler, which contained 250 mg of mephentermine, even though 250 mg represents 10-20 times the usually prescribed central nervous system stimulating dose. The "Wyamine" inhaler was finally withdrawn from the market on July 22, 1971, because of pressure from the Justice Department.

But even though the inhalers did introduce millions of young people to the amphetamines, most users found that it was just as easy to procure the pills. In the first three years after "Benzedrine" was introduced in tablet form, sales rose to over 50 million units. The outbreak of World War II gave perhaps the greatest impetus to date to both the legal, medically authorized use and the illegal, black market abuse of these drugs. By 1958 the annual legal United States production of amphetamines had risen to 75,000 pounds, or 3.5 billion tablets -- enough to supply every man, woman, and child with about 20 standard (5 mg) doses. Less than 10 years later, the drug industry admitted it was pouring out 160,000 pounds -- about 8 billion amphetamine tablets -- per year, or enough for 35 to 50 pills for every living American. By 1970 reported legal amphetamine production had risen to over 10 billion tablets and in 1971 it rose again to over 12 billion.

By 1946 Smith, Kline & French had been so successful in its amphet-