

15432 COMPETITIVE PROBLEMS IN THE DRUG INDUSTRY

were routinely present in the animal feed. They have also been found in the enteric (intestinal) bacteria of a human population never exposed to antibiotics for therapeutic purposes. (2) In discussing this phenomena, Goldstein, Aronson and Kalman observed:

Thus, the transfer factors evidently occur widely; the extensive use of antibiotics merely favoring their proliferation by a selection mechanism. They constitute a significant problem in hospital patients, as evidenced by a study in which stool cultures from 100 apparently normal hospitalized infants (3) revealed multiple drug resistant bacteria in 81 of them.

Why is drug resistance important? Why is it important that the resistance (R) factor can be transferred to other enteric organisms? What does all this have to do with the promotion of drugs in Latin America?

The problem is important to the millions of people who live in Latin America, it is important for the 2.5 million residents of the United States who travel to Mexico annually, it is important to the millions of residents of the United States, Europe, Asia and Africa who travel to Mexico and the other Latin American countries every year. At least one-third of the travelers to Mexico and many other Latin American countries are likely to suffer an episode of gastroenteritis during or following their trip. (4) Although many of these are minor, many are serious and some have proved lethal.

There are three enteric infections that pose significant potential risks to Americans or others traveling in Mexico and other Latin American countries: