

15456 COMPETITIVE PROBLEMS IN THE DRUG INDUSTRY

to us their dismay, their frustration, their anger at what one described as "this whole sickening business."

--They have described to us the rise of resistant strains of bacteria, due almost certainly to the excessive and irrational use of antibiotics. Physicians and pharmacists are distributing these potent drugs as if they were popcorn.

--They have described the rate of fatal aplastic anemia in Mexico, now one of the highest in the world, related in substantial part to the use of chloramphenicol. One leading microbiologist in Guatemala told us, "When a child is given chloramphenicol for typhoid fever, and it dies from aplastic anemia, this is a tragedy but perhaps an unavoidable tragedy. But where it happens when the drug is used to treat a case of virus pneumonia, or an undiagnosed respiratory infection, or a sore throat, this is unconscionable."

--Others have told us of serious reactions to amphotericin B, given to treat minor fungus infections without any of the precautions made known to U.S. physicians.

--They have told us of serious or fatal blood disorders--including agranulocytosis and aplastic anemia--following prolonged use of anti-arthritis drugs.

--They have told us of the excessive use of steroids resulting in perforated peptic ulcer or explosive flare-ups of tuberculosis or candidiasis.

--They have told us of the cases of permanent brain damage caused by excessive use of antipsychotic tranquilizers--and some-