

times by tranquilizers given to control bed wetting or nail-biting in children, or an inability to get along in school.

We do not know how often such tragedies occur. In most cases, it seems, neither the patient nor his family, nor even the physician, is aware that the irrational use of a drug was responsible.

One fact that may possibly be related is that, generally throughout the Latin American countries, there is no such thing as medical malpractice. Malpractice suits are unknown.

Another related factor may be the influence and the numbers of detail men, or visitadores. In the United States, there is one detail man for about 10 physicians. In Ecuador, there is one for every 8 physicians. In Colombia, there is one for every 5. And in Guatemala, Mexico, and Brazil, there is one for every 3. There are some physicians in Latin America who take advice from none of these visitadores, whom they call "visiting professors of therapeutics." There are other physicians who take advice only from these company representatives.

In many of these countries, the average detail man makes a bigger income, part salary and part commission, than does the average physician.

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The inconsistencies we have found are glaring. I suspect that similar differences could be found in the case of many other products marketed by many other global drug firms.