

15458 COMPETITIVE PROBLEMS IN THE DRUG INDUSTRY

When these inconsistencies became apparent to us, we showed them to heads of some of the American and European companies involved, and asked how these could be explained.

In no instance did the company spokesman deny the differences. Their responses usually included these defenses:

1. "Latin American physicians don't need any warnings. They're already aware of any hazards." (Such a claim, we learned, totally infuriates Latin American medical specialists-- medical school professors, clinical pharmacologists, and particularly hematologists and pathologists who, by the nature of their specialties, are most aware of the damage done and where the bodies are buried.)
2. "We make more full disclosure in our package inserts." But, we have found, there are also discrepancies in these inserts, which are not always full or complete. Further, many physicians do not see the package inserts, and usually they are quickly discarded.)
3. "It is our detail men who give each physician full information on hazards." (This is a defense we have long heard in this country. But in Latin America, as in the United States, it is generally held that "you don't knock your own product"--certainly not if you're working on commission.
4. "Physicians know that, if they write to us, we will be glad to send them more complete information." (This defense does not deserve the dignity of a comment,)