

5. It is said that "no drug manufacturer would engage in such shoddy practices--would tamper with the truth, or cover up dangers--because in the long run, this would cost him the confidence of the medical profession." (I don't know the answer to this one so far as Latin American physicians are concerned. I don't know that much about the Latin American medical profession. I do know, however, that where the profession in the United States is concerned, such a defense is nonsense. Over the years, we have witnessed the record of the so-called "Dear Doctor letters," through which many major drug companies were required by FDA to notify every physician in the country that they had, in fact, tampered with the truth, or made claims that could not be supported, or failed to disclose hazards. We have seen the remarkable cases of Chloromycetin and MER/29; and all the civil suits for damages. And what happened to the good name of the companies--to their reputation with the medical profession--to their annual sales and their annual profits? The answer is distressingly clear--by and large, essentially nothing happened.)

There are two additional defenses that are more noteworthy--

6. "The differences in promotion represent honest differences in opinion. That is, we're honestly convinced that we're right and FDA is wrong." (Such an attitude might be more palatable if a company said one thing to physicians in the United States, where FDA is constantly looking over its shoulder, and another thing to all physicians everywhere in Latin America. It is more difficult to accept, however, when it is obvious that