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During the summer of 1976, we were pleased to reply to requests for additional information from numerous medical, pharmacy, economic, and legal organizations and research centers and individuals in Mexico, Central America, South America, the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Canada, and the United States. Similar requests were received from individual pharmaceutical firms, and representatives of some of these companies visited us in San Francisco to consult on aspects of the problem.

On November 11, at its meeting in Bermuda, the council of the IFPMA adopted a resolution--formally introduced by the United States delegation--calling upon every drug company to see that labeling "should be consistent with the body of scientific and medical evidence pertaining to that product," and that "particular care should be taken that essential information as to medical products' safety, contraindications and side effects is appropriately communicated."

It is my understanding that this resolution has been informally brought to the attention of the World Health Organization.

Perhaps most significant, however, are steps taken even earlier by a number of multinational drug companies. It has recently been possible for us to study the 1976 issue (published in September 1976) of the Central American edition of the Diccionario de Especialidades Farmeuticas, and compare the promotional statements made to physicians in 1973 (when we began our research) with those made in 1976. For 26 products, marketed by 15 global companies--United States, Swiss, and French--these developments were evident:

--For 9 products, the companies have elected to tone down their claims and present warnings comparable to those they give to physicians in the United States.

- For 2 products, the companies were already making reasonably full disclosure in 1973 and have continued to do so.

- For 11 other products, the companies--in some cases in violation of Central American laws--are continuing to exaggerate the clinical values of the drugs and to minimize, gloss over, or totally ignore the potentially serious or fatal side effects.