

COMPETITIVE PROBLEMS IN THE DRUG INDUSTRY 16571

narcotic prescription, rather than to its effectiveness as an analgesic...."

DOCTORS ALSO MISLED ON DPX DANGER

Lilly also claimed DPX had "fewer side effects than codeine" but by 1970, the respected source of drug information, The Medical Letter wrote "many physicians are not sufficiently aware that coma, circulatory and respiratory depression, convulsion and death can result from overdose with propoxyphene, that the clinical picture is similar to that seen with narcotic drugs...."

A recent survey (1977) of U.S. physicians shows that most continue to think DPX is a much less dangerous drug than other drugs, which, in fact, are involved in far fewer drug deaths than DPX.¹

A FINE LINE BETWEEN USE AND ABUSE

In larger than recommended doses DPX produces a euphoria or "high" which makes it attractive as a drug of abuse. It is generally agreed that DPX can be addicting--albeit less so than morphine--and one study concluded that "addiction can occur under the usual circumstances of medical prescribing."²

The 2nd Edition of Clinical Pharmacology (1978) by Melmon and Morelli stated that "the most prominent effects (of DPX) may be its addictive quality."

The Department of Justice DAWN (Drug Abuse Warning Network) data show that among patients in emergency rooms whose source of drugs could be ascertained, over 90% obtained their DPX with legal prescriptions.³

NATURE OF DPX DEATHS

In a May 4, 1978 letter to FDA, Oregon Deputy State Medical Examiner Dr. Larry Lewman wrote that "propoxyphene is by far the most common cause of fatal drug overdose in Oregon."

¹ International Journal of Addiction 12, 43, 1977.

² International Journal of Addiction 9, 775, 1974.

³ DAWN Quarterly Report, July-September 1977.