

I believe Senator Hatch was concerned if someone taking Darvon at the prescribed or recommended dose could conceivably experience a fatal or lethal overdose.

I am not a clinical pharmacologist, but I see the situations where people are taking medicine at the prescribed dose and then combine it with something else such as alcohol or tranquilizers or some other medication. The combination or interaction has the potential for being lethal even if both are within the prescribed recommended doses. That is a point that does concern me.

Another point in terms of prescribing drugs is that we have already had experience with DES with radiation to the head and neck and an increased incidence of cancer, with respect to the use of estrogens and increased instances of endometrial cancer and what we are going to find out about birth control pills in the future is unknown.

The same point pertains to Darvon. Just now as you heard it's been on the market for 20 years and only now are we learning more about its metabolites and potentially serious cardiotoxic effects that it has.

Who knows what we may find out in the future? I think it would be unfortunate to continue to have a drug such as Darvon widely and readily available without being aware of what its potential side effects are.

The most important point I want to make as a practicing physician is that I can practice medicine day in and day out and not be concerned about patients being disappointed, or be concerned about patients leaving me because I do not use it. I would not hesitate at all to say that I think it need never be prescribed.

Senator NELSON. Thank you very much, Dr. Newman.

We will now hear from Morris Boynoff, a pharmacist from Mendocino, Calif.

Senator BOSCHWITZ. Dr. Newman, how convincing did you find your explanations that aspirin is more effective and safer? Do your patients accept that?

Dr. Newman. My experience is that patients do accept it. Sometimes patients respond that they cannot take aspirin but they can take one of the buffered aspirin preparations. That is quite common.

There are some people who are legitimately allergic to aspirin. In those instances, acetaminophen is equally acceptable. If you talk to patients and explain why you are doing something or not doing something, they accept it.

Senator BOSCHWITZ. Therefore you do not prescribe Darvon?

Dr. NEWMAN. I use a type of prescription where I keep a carbon copy of all the prescriptions that I write. I went back and looked at the prescriptions for the past 6 months and found I had not prescribed Darvon in the past 6 months and I cannot really recall having prescribed it.

Senator BOSCHWITZ. What do you prescribe instead?

Dr. NEWMAN. As an alternative to aspirin or acetaminophen, I prescribed codeine. But, many times I do not prescribe anything. Sometimes people are going to hurt. I am a big prescriber of "time."

Senator BOSCHWITZ. And your patients accept that?

Dr. NEWMAN. The patients accept that; yes.

Senator BOSCHWITZ. Dr. Beaver, are you a practicing physician, or have you practiced?