

16816 COMPETITIVE PROBLEMS IN THE DRUG INDUSTRY

result of these problems DEA placed it under Schedule IV of the CSA in 1977.

Our analysis of the available data on propoxyphene fatalities shows that the majority of associated deaths occurred because of deliberate overuse or abuse, as shown in the two tables in Appendix B. Propoxyphene is one of the most frequently used drugs in suicides and suicide gestures; in absolute incidents it follows only the barbiturates and non-barbiturate sedative-hypnotics in associations with drug-induced suicide. However, when viewed in relation to the number of prescriptions issued, the relative number of deaths from propoxyphene is lower than that for a number of other drugs.

We know of no cases at present in which death was caused by propoxyphene products alone when taken in customary doses and in which neither alcohol nor tranquilizers were also involved. There are, however, a number of "accidental" deaths which have apparently occurred as a result of the consumption of propoxyphene in quantities smaller than those used in suicide, yet still in excess of recommended therapeutic dosage and usually combined with alcohol and/or tranquilizers.

The mechanism of death in those cases is commonly attributed to respiratory depression, a typical action of narcotics, although cardiac toxicity must be considered with seriousness. In testimony