

Statement To The U.S. Senate Select Committee On Small Business
Chairman: Senator Gaylord Nelson

THE MEDICO-LEGAL TOXICOLOGY OF PROPOXYPHENE

I am Dr. Bryan S. Finkle, Director of the Center for Human Toxicology at the University of Utah Health Sciences Center; and Assistant Professor of Pharmacology-Toxicology and Pathology.

Gentlemen:

I welcome the opportunity to present to you a short (10 minute) statement on the current toxicology of propoxyphene and I thank you for this privilege.

The role of propoxyphene and its major metabolites in medico-legal investigation has been of interest to toxicologists for the past decade.

As the availability of the drug and its subsequent prescription by physicians increased so, inevitably, its frequency of occurrence in cases of sudden, unexplained death presented analytical and pharmacological problems for forensic and clinical scientists. As a direct result of several reports in the early 1970's indicating an apparent growing involvement of propoxyphene in forensic toxicology cases the Center for Human Toxicology, University of Utah, (supported by Eli Lilly and Company and F.D.A.) under my direction undertook an independent national collaborative study in 1975-76 to assess the role of propoxyphene in postmortem cases and place the drug in perspective against demographic and epidemiological information about the deceased individuals. The study was also designed to