

I am not saying that Merck is necessarily making a better prednisone than some of these other companies, but here you have two big companies.

Mr. GORDON. Upjohn is another, for \$2.25.

Dr. GARB. Yes, there is Upjohn. I did not see them at the bottom of the list. There is Upjohn too.

Now I think this is a perfect example of how the confusion in drug names leads to a pricing structure which is not really a free market pricing structure.

Senator NELSON. That is a very good point. Did you have anything more?

Dr. FITELSON. No, sir. That completes the work I have done so far for Medical Letter.

Senator NELSON. How long have you been doing work for the Medical Letter?

Dr. FITELSON. Oh, for about 12 or 13 years on various products.

Senator NELSON. Does the Medical Letter have a continuous program of testing?

Dr. FITELSON. From time to time, they seem to get spurts. They decide to test certain drugs. I am now running a digitoxin survey for them.

Senator NELSON. I want to thank you very much.

Mr. COUGHLIN. Dr. Fitelson, I just have a few questions I want to ask you with regard to testing.

I notice on page 2 of your statement where you refer to the prednisone tablet test conducted, you were looking for various impurities. I would assume one of those impurities would be cortisone; is that right?

Dr. FITELSON. That is right.

Mr. COUGHLIN. Aside from cortisone, what other impurities were you looking for?

Dr. FITELSON. As I recall, the U.S. Pharmacopeia specifies each steroid to test for. I think it is hydrocortisone and cortisone. I am pretty sure they are. They vary with the steroid.

Mr. COUGHLIN. I also gathered from the first paragraph of your statement that you ran off chemical testing only; is that right?

Dr. FITELSON. I am a chemist; yes, sir.

Mr. COUGHLIN. And the results enumerated or enunciated on page 2 of the statement prove that prednisone tablets are chemically equivalent, is that right, as far as the steroid content is concerned?

Dr. FITELSON. Which are you referring to?

Mr. COUGHLIN. In other words, if you were conducting a chemical test, I assume on the basis of the conclusion you made on page 2 that you regarded the number of products tested as being chemically equivalent?

Dr. FITELSON. The prednisone you mean?

Mr. COUGHLIN. Yes; that is right.

Dr. FITELSON. Yes.

Mr. COUGHLIN. Now with regard to them being chemically equivalent as far as the steroid content is concerned, do these tests prove also that they are therapeutically equivalent?

Dr. FITELSON. I can only reason backwards.