

but nonprescription drugs as well. I would like to cite an example of this, if I may.

Senator NELSON. Surely.

Dr. CLUFF. This is a man whom we had observed during the course of our studies, who was admitted to the hospital with a disease known as erythema multiforme, which is a peculiar skin disease associated with fever and glandular enlargement, and is known to be a common manifestation of an allergic reaction to a drug. One of the most commonly incriminated drugs in this instance is a constituent of laxatives commercially available, nonprescription laxatives.

Senator NELSON. What is that?

Dr. CLUFF. Phenolphthalein is the chemical substance that is a common constituent of many nonprescription laxatives. The patient was advised of the fact that he had an allergic reaction to this particular laxative and was told by the physician not to take it again.

Now he was advised not to take the drug again by trade name. The patient left the hospital, but was readmitted 1 month later with exactly the same disease again. He had not taken the same trade name product again which had previously caused his difficulty. He had taken another trade name product, a laxative which also contained phenolphthalein.

This time the patient was again advised by the physician not to take these two trade name laxatives. So the patient then returned home, but was readmitted again a short time later with a reoccurrence of the same illness. This time he had taken a third trade name product laxative which also contained phenolphthalein.

In order to avoid any subsequent difficulty for this patient, the physician then obtained as complete a listing as he could of all of the known preparations by trade name containing phenolphthalein so that the patient could avoid taking the drug again.

I think this is an illustration where designation of a drug by trade name rather than by chemical constituents can lead to serious difficulty.

Senator NELSON. Would this have been avoided if the doctor had used a generic or official name?

Dr. CLUFF. Only if the drug was obtainable over the pharmacist's counter by generic name. In this instance this is not, of course, the ordinary way in which the patient will have purchased the drug from the drugstore. In these instances the three different drugs were Ex-lax, the other trade name I can't remember, and one was the 4-way Cold Tablet I believe, and I have forgotten what the second one was, but in this instance these drugs contained more than one chemical constituent, so that in prescribing of the preparation, if prescribed by generic name, one would have to prescribe it by the name of all of the constituents.

In this instance it was just as important for the patient and the physician to be aware of the fact that there was more than one trade named product containing phenolphthalein.

Senator NELSON. Thank you. Go ahead.

Dr. CLUFF (reading.) (2) Approximately 20 percent of untoward reactions to drugs in patients requiring admission to the hospital are attributable to nonprescription, or over-the-counter drugs, including laxatives, analgesics, and antacids. The remainder are attributable to