

with the same generic name must be erased. A major study should be undertaken of the most frequently prescribed drugs to determine the efficacy of brand-name products and their supposed generic equivalents.

And also, Senator Nelson, there is the point that you made earlier about the statement of the president of Schering about Meticorten and prednisone. There is really no evidence that that statement has any validity, and I think that in some official way, that must be imprinted upon the minds of the doctors in this country.

Mr. GORDON. Doctor, how about antibiotics which are batch tested?

Dr. CHERKASKY. I would have no question about that.

Mr. GORDON. Would you recommend batch testing for all drugs?

Dr. CHERKASKY. I am not really technically competent enough to tell you exactly what the process should be, but I am certain that there are technically competent people, our pharmacologists and others who could prescribe a method of testing or control which would provide me with the security that I feel that I require, so that while I can't give you the technical answer to that question, but I don't think it is a serious technical problem.

Senator NELSON. On this question of the careful testing of drugs, better investigations to determine generic equivalency and so forth, which is an important issue, I notice that in the testimony from the representatives of the companies and in their advertising they keep referring to generic drugs versus brand-name drugs without making it very clear that as a matter of fact, a large number of brand-name companies make generic drugs. So if you are talking about generic drugs you are talking about generic drugs made by—

Dr. CHERKASKY. Everybody.

Senator NELSON (continuing). Everybody. Next we take a look at prednisone, for example, in the Medical Letter. For all practical purposes many of the 22 drugs there are generic products. These firms were licensed by Schering to manufacture prednisone.

Dr. CHERKASKY. Right.

Senator NELSON. Some of them decided to sell to a certain market where it isn't necessary to advertise and establish a brand name, so they don't sell under a brand name. It is prednisone.

Some of them decide to go into the retail market and compete and therefore they spend money to popularize their brand name. But all that brand is, I take it, is their generic prednisone with their brand name added; is that not correct?

Dr. CHERKASKY. Identical, absolutely, sir. This is what the trouble is. It is really misleading advertising.

Senator NELSON. So, the real question here is for the FDA to expand its inspection, chemical testing, quality control, and clinical testing of brand-name drugs made by brand-name companies, generic-name drugs made by brand companies, and generic drugs made by generic companies.

We are talking about the whole drug field, and it shouldn't be isolated as though there was something perfect about all drugs made by brand-name companies and something suspect about all drugs made by companies that only make generic drugs; is that not correct?

Dr. CHERKASKY. Not only is that correct, Senator, but I would say to you that the responsibility with regard to the great drug houses is greater because of the confidence we have vested in them.