

I next summarize this section essentially as saying yes, I do think generic names are worthwhile and in the process of teaching medical students, in talks that I might give to physicians about the country, I always use the generic term.

Now, I include a remark here concerning Dr. Burack's book, "Handbook of Prescription Drugs," and note that I do quarrel with him about a few technical points, which always occurs in the medical world, and find that this book is really not the compendium that you are referring to.

I find that it is very useful in terms of costs, and I agree with the thesis that he presents in the book.

Senator NELSON. I believe he states in his book that it is not intended to be a comprehensive compendium.

Dr. KUNIN. That is right.

Senator NELSON. It was intended so the layman could understand it.

Dr. KUNIN. That is right.

Senator NELSON. And it is not the final word on the subject.

Dr. KUNIN. Yes. I find this to be a valuable book in those terms.

Senator NELSON. I might add that I have received a letter from a very distinguished professor at a fine school of medicine. He said he was very pleased with the book and wished that such a book had been available when he started out as a practicing physician.

Dr. KUNIN. Well, I make the point in my text that Dr. Burack is primarily concerned with the interest of the patient and the cost of drugs to him, and that most physicians are equally concerned about cost and that the lists such as these are very helpful.

The practicing physician, however, and I include myself here, is troubled by what the commercial pharmacist might do with his carefully worded generic prescription. How can the physician be certain that the pharmacist will always give the patient the least expensive preparation, or even that he will carry it in stock?

It is entirely possible that the pharmacist may charge prime prices for a low cost generic preparation. This problem is minimized, of course, in the large hospitals armed with a formulary system and conscientious pharmacists and by agencies which make bulk purchases, but what about the corner drugstore?

I believe this point is very important, because this is one of the points that physicians have raised with me in conversations.

We are very conscientious about prescribing generic drugs, but what does it really mean in terms of the patient?

Senator NELSON. To use the example of prednisone, if a doctor numbers himself among the 10,000 physicians who read the Medical Letter, couldn't he very well prescribe prednisone and then select the company whose product he prefers for his patient?

Dr. KUNIN. Sure.

Senator NELSON. Now, isn't it also true that the pharmacist is at quite a disadvantage here in that he can't stock everything, and so if the doctors are prescribing an expensive drug, there are 22 prednisones, and if the doctors are prescribing one that costs \$17.90, and that is what comes in on the prescription, then under the law he is not permitted, in 40 States, to substitute?

Dr. KUNIN. That is right.

Senator NELSON. To substitute a generic for a brand name?