

Senator NELSON. Isn't it correct that most of the fixed combinations are more expensive than if the drugs included were prescribed separately?

Dr. KUNIN. It is my understanding that that is correct although I have not looked into that specifically.

Mr. GORDON. Then, why do doctors prescribe them?

Dr. KUNIN. I would suspect that this is related to the amount of advertising, the beautiful name Urobiotic, which is designed around the indication, the frustrations that one deals with in terms of individuals who may have infections or other disease stages in which one uses one drug or another and has difficulty with results.

In other instances, there may be a historical reason for a particular combination. The reason, perhaps, no longer exists, but the tradition may still continue.

Senator NELSON. But aren't additional fixed combinations still being placed on the market?

Dr. KUNIN. Sure.

Senator NELSON. Is there anybody of distinction in the field of medicine who argues that there is value to fixed combinations?

Dr. KUNIN. Not to my knowledge, sir, not to my knowledge. I know of no one in the field of antimicrobial therapy who you might say is academically concerned with the problem who would feel that a fixed combination would be essential or really required or needed.

Senator NELSON. Then aren't you really saying that the doctor who prescribes such a combination doesn't know really what he is doing?

Dr. KUNIN. No. What I am saying is that the doctor who prescribes it doesn't believe perhaps what I say or what my colleagues might say. He may have his own reasons and perhaps he should have his day to present his position here. I see no personal reason to do this.

Senator NELSON. Well, if you state that you are not aware of anybody of any distinction in the medical profession who claims that there is any value to a fixed combination, can you then think of any reason for a doctor to prescribe one?

Dr. KUNIN. Well, I would suppose that it is a reflection once again of advertising, of detail men pressing certain products, of our failure in the field of postgraduate medical education.

Senator NELSON. Are you saying that the doctor really doesn't know what he is doing when he is prescribing? Are you implying a failure of education in the field of drugs? Is that so hard for you to say? I think it is a very sad commentary on the medical profession, and I would like to have a doctor of your distinction say it more directly than say it is a failure of—

Dr. KUNIN. I would like to dilate on that point, because if a physician finds that a particular fixed combination that he is using works, and many of these are effective agents, he may say, "This is an effective agent which in my experience works perfectly well."

What we are really saying is not that this agent does not work well or isn't effective essentially. What we are saying is that the combination is really no greater than one with more potent ingredients, and that it would be wiser in practice to use one drug. It does not mean that he is using a drug which will hurt his patient necessarily. It means that he is using something more complicated when he could use something more simple.