

Senator LONG. Even if it were because someone lied to them or misinformed them, they are very reluctant to admit that they made a mistake.

I argued with my brother-in-law, who is a doctor, about whether I should pay a bill when a doctor improperly diagnosed the disease of a relative. And he advised me to go ahead and pay it, understanding what the problems are in medical practice. Being a doctor himself and the son of a doctor, he felt that I should by all means pay it.

I recall another case where a friend was suffering some malady, and a very reputable doctor advised him that this was a disease that was bothersome, but by no means serious, and advised him of what the treatment should be. Subsequently, he went to one of the outstanding clinics of the country, where his disease was diagnosed as cancer. The doctor who made the original diagnosis insisted, and stuck by his original conclusion right up to the point where they took out part of the body, and there was a great big piece of cancer. So, if he had stayed by the original diagnosis, the man would have been dead.

But there is no doubt about it, if your statement is correct—that these people die of this drug, that these figures—1 in 400,000—might be off by 2 decimal points. And I assume that you believe that that is quite possible?

Dr. WATKINS. Very definitely so; much higher than any estimate that has been made so far. For that victim the statistics are 100 percent.

Senator NELSON. Is there any place in FDA or anywhere else in the country where there is a record kept of all the known cases? Or is there any known procedure by which they are reported to any central place in the country?

Dr. WATKINS. Not that I know of, but there again you are going back to the physician. And I am loyal to my profession. I think it is the most wonderful profession on the face of the earth. But doctors are human beings, and they have the same weaknesses that anyone else has. And the average doctor is not going to admit a mistake if he can help it; I say the average. And for something as serious as this, if there is any way he can get out from under it, I think he will. I think it is proven.

Senator LONG. If he admits a mistake—and let's face it, doctors do make mistakes like anyone else—he is subject to the patients or at least the patients' relatives, going all over town and telling everyone they know that that doctor just killed that victim by prescribing the wrong drug. And that is a very grave injury to a doctor, I take it, to have that happen, when people go over the streets of his hometown saying that he killed somebody by prescribing the wrong drug.

Dr. WATKINS. That is true. I made a habit for years after this of going around to Parke, Davis at the AMA conventions and asking the reactions to this drug. They say, it has never been proven. I think they will tell you today that it has never been proven, they took aspirin or other things at the same time.

Senator LONG. The aspirin might have killed him.

Mr. ELFSTROM. That is what they told me.

Dr. WATKINS. It has never been proven. I have a letter from a doctor in St. Joseph, Mo., a very good friend of mine. And this was after the thing broke. And the salesmen were coming in and telling him