

cases are younger, healthier and wealthier.

Patterns of Drug Use by the Elderly

Essential for an effective attack against the drug problems of the elderly are detailed, objective data on the drugs they actually use and the costs of these prescriptions.

In 1966, for example, the elderly obtained about 198 million out-of-hospital prescriptions from community pharmacies at a total retail cost of \$852 million, involving many thousands of different drug products. ^{a/} But this knowledge is not enough.

It is necessary to know--

--which drugs, by brand or generic name, were dispensed for the elderly.

--which were utilized most frequently;

--which diseases accounted for the greatest drug utilization;

--which drugs were most frequently involved in long-term maintenance therapy;

a/ An additional 26.9 million prescriptions, at a cost of \$104.7 million, were obtained from hospital and mail order pharmacies and other sources.