

DRUG QUALITY

During the past several years, the clinical equivalency of generic name products has been the center of particularly heated controversy.

This issue may be presented as follows:

--Given two drug products containing essentially the same amount of the same active ingredient-- that is, two chemical equivalents--will they give essentially the same clinical effects?

This question, of increasing interest to both physicians and patients, is now under careful consideration by the scientific community. Objective research has shown that in certain instances the clinical effects may not be the same.

The Task Force has found, however, that lack of clinical equivalency among chemical equivalents meeting all official standards has been grossly exaggerated as a major hazard to the public health. Where low-cost chemical equivalents have been employed--in foreign drug programs, in leading American hospitals, in State welfare programs, in Veterans Administration and Public Health Service hospitals, and in American military operations--