

are such that I see little hope for it. Rules of conduct are laid down but they are intended only as public relations gestures and their force is apparent rather than real. The older, well established, conservative houses once did resist many of the abuses. However, the entry of newer, solely profit-oriented competitors has encouraged an ever-increasing substitution of the more profitable practice for the ethical, and all firms have found themselves under increasing pressure to adopt the practices in order to survive. One can no longer think of pharmaceutical houses as black or white. All are shades of gray and while some are almost black none to my knowledge is white. In this setting it is difficult to conceive of enforcement of rules of conduct from within since one hesitates to throw stones when his own house is made of glass. Participation in intra-industry meetings will convince anyone of this. It is my conviction that unless sweeping reforms are instituted a truly ethical house cannot survive in the present competitive wrangle. The pressure for those reforms will almost certainly have to come from without.

An intelligent program of education should help but it is well to remember that it generally takes several years of intensive analytic treatment to significantly alter one's belief in and need for magic. The abdication of leaders and educators in medicine is disturbing. Post graduate medical education is their province, not the pharmaceutical industry's. Unfortunately, I can contribute far more to a definition of the problem than to its solution, and I am not unappreciative of the potential of the adversary they face. There have, however, been encouraging moves by courageous medical educators to ascertain and disseminate unbiased information on drugs. Unfortunately, the principal audience for this information consists of those who are already skeptical. There are far too many physicians who must still be taught the difference between a free golf ball, the magnetic personality of a detailman, and a scientific fact as criteria for the evaluation of a drug. It is of interest that the industry generally shrugs off these moves since experience has taught that they do not affect its best customers.

Finally, I suggest with hesitation the consideration of a central agency empowered to approve or to disapprove the sale of drugs on the basis of objective evidence of efficacy and to ban misleading and ambiguous advertising and promotion. I recognize that it will be virtually impossible to set up proper criteria but there are some areas where it is better to be guided by the dictates of good common sense rather than tortured legal constructions. It is a curious fact that as things stand now proof of the efficacy of a drug, to which some scientific rules can be applied, is governed essentially by the rule that anything goes if it cannot be shown that it probably will kill too many people who take it. On the other hand, a drug claim which is obviously misleading must be proved so by a process requiring the mental gymnastics of an insane philosopher. Surely a panel of experts, who can distinguish between privilege and license, charged with the responsibility for protecting medical care can make these decisions better than someone who has something to sell, and who simply makes "business decisions".

I cannot believe that a distraught mother whose infant lies desperately ill faces the same problem and emotions that she does in selecting a cereal from the Super Market shelves. While the physician is interposed between the patient and the drug industry there is a chain of responsibility and each member must accept his share. Drugs are a part of medical care and medical care has unique requirements. If the industry cannot exercise the necessary restraint it should not be free to exploit the privileges. It is this the industry fears most since so much of its sales volume is dependent on exploiting the privilege and since it recognizes the danger of being hoist by its own petard. I know of nothing more likely to generate the pressure necessary to persuade the industry to clean its own house.