

front page, cover stories, and if necessary, a national meeting about it. I never saw that. It took the dramatic publicity from these hearings to do it. The medical profession should have done that.

Of course, they will say, we ran an article a few years ago. We ran one another time. But the fact is the wide misprescribing continued and the leaders of the medical profession knew it and they did not stop it.

Dr. ALFANO. These are the opinions of certain individuals. You mentioned Dr. Dameshek, that 10 percent only needed or it was necessary to use Chloromycetin. I say when this is substantiated and it is an absolute fact, you will find it in all the medical journals that a drug should not be used because it has more dangers than it has benefits. Until that happens, I do not believe that you should expect a journal or a society to arbitrarily take action against a particular drug, particularly the one you mentioned, which is known to be an excellent drug, with its indications.

Senator NELSON. There is not a medical organization or a leading distinguished authority in America who has doubted the drama of this situation—that it is being widely misprescribed. I have a file you could cry reading. I get letters every month. I have a file that high: “My daughter came home from college with a sore throat and got Chloromycetin and died.” One from a husband last week with a 30-year old wife who had Chloromycetin for the flu and died. “My son had a hangnail and died”—“an infected gum, and died.” Every single case nonindicated. Every single case.

I did not see the profession or the journals screaming to the high heavens about it. I think it is an indictment.

Dr. ALFANO. Did the profession get that information? I have not seen a letter come to our organization or the journal concerning these specific cases of misuse. However, you must remember, there are 831 million patient visits a year. Certainly there are going to be exceptions to good medical care out of that 831 million patient visits. But I do not believe because you have some examples that you have to condemn the whole profession or the system.

Senator NELSON. But when you have distinguished authorities saying in their judgment, 90 percent is for nonindicated cases, one of them saying 99 percent in his judgment, nobody is refuting it. Maybe it is only 85 percent, maybe it is 95, but it is terribly high. And these publications all take ads.

Dr. ALFANO. It may be 89 percent in his case, it may be 1 percent to someone in practice out in the suburbs. I do not know what those figures are.

Senator NELSON. There are certainly a number of doctors who never misprescribe at all. We know that. But this figure is awfully big and it dropped by half when the hearings started.

I have imposed on you enough and I appreciate very much your taking the time to come. I do not want to have you come back again. I thank you for your willingness to testify today.

I will be back in about 10 minutes.

(Short recess.)

Senator NELSON. Dr. Krantz, I am sorry we have had some interruptions. The Senate would be a lot better place if I were running it, but I am not.