

RELATIONSHIP OF PROFESSIONAL MEDICAL ORGANIZATIONS
TO THE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

It is not only natural and inevitable but highly desirable that there be a close relationship between the pharmaceutical industry and the medical profession. This is essential in the public interest and necessary in order for us to provide the best care and treatment that we can for our patients. That is what we all want in the final analysis with the best care and treatment that we can get for our patients. We are providing professional services for our patients in the course of which we use drugs, biologicals, instruments, and supplies of various kinds. We need to know something about the companies that provide these materials.

At the same time, the drug, instrument, appliance, and other producers of materials used in health care need to know a good deal about the problems we practicing physicians have in using these materials in the care of patients. They need to know how and when and under what circumstances we use their products, and what the results are—both good and bad.

There is no way for us to find out what we need to know from each other without a continuing dialogue and exchange of information between us, in person as well as in writing. This necessarily takes place at an individual level, such as between the individual physician and the individual manufacturer's personal representative, and at an organizational level. The latter is particularly important because of the complex matter of logistics. There are more than 300,000 physicians and several hundred manufacturers. To provide the necessary exchange of information on an individual basis obviously would be impossible. To try to do it on the basis of a single publication or even a few would be as impractical as to try to do it on the basis of a single meeting. Each of us has to get our message to the other in many different ways.

The science of medicine, particularly as related to drugs and instrumentation as well as techniques, has advanced so far and so rapidly in the past 20 years that no one method of disseminating information, acquiring information, or translating it to the care of sick patients can suffice. It has become necessary for many different techniques and many different organizations to be developed to do the job.

Just as we are all dependent on each other in the philosophic and scientific sense in the pursuit of our common goal, it necessarily follows that there is a certain amount of financial interdependence too. It costs money to do research, to produce a drug or an instrument, to publish literature, and to have a meeting. It seems natural and logical that a manufacturer of drugs would provide information about his products in a magazine or journal published and read by physicians. In the same journal, of course, medical scientific information is transmitted from one physician to others. So long as the advertising and the medical scientific information in the articles written by the physician-authors is ethical, accurate, and honest then the best interests of the public are being served.

It is not the advertising campaign of the drug manufacturers, nor their contributions to medical organizations for scientific or social affairs that convinces the practitioner of the virtues or safety of a new or old drug, but only his own personal experience gained from listen-