

CHART 5.—USE OF MAJOR CLASSES OF PSYCHOTROPIC AGENTS BY DIAGNOSIS (1968)¹

All mental disorders	Major tranquilizers 50	Minor tranquilizers 25-34	Anti-depressants 60-70	Stimulants 5	Sedatives 10	Hypnotics 6
Schizophrenic disorders.....	27	3	6-9	-----	-----	16
Depressive reactions.....	21	8-20	61-64	40	4	33
Anxiety reaction.....	17	42-46	7-8	-----	46	16
Psychoneurotic disorders.....	5	9-15	3-5	-----	24	-----
Senile psychosis.....	4	-----	2-3	-----	-----	-----
All other mental disorders.....	24	24-30	16	-----	26	35

¹ Representative drugs of the class and not the entire class tabulated.

Source: National Disease and Therapeutic Index of Lea and Associates.

Dr. LEVINE. Considering the appropriateness of the diagnosis to the drug class, we find that the use of these drugs is, by and large, rational. For example, in the minor tranquilizer category only 3 percent of the representative drugs are prescribed for schizophrenia while 27 percent of the major tranquilizers are prescribed for this disorder. Likewise, up to 64 percent of the time when antidepressants are given for a psychiatric disorder, they are given for depressive reactions, whereas minor tranquilizers are given only 8-20 percent of the time and major tranquilizers 21 percent of the time for this same disorder.

Mr. GORDON. Dr. Levine, may I ask a clarifying question here? Are you saying that when these psychotropic drugs are used for psychiatric problems they are used rationally?

Dr. LEVINE. When we look at the psychiatric disorders, we find a good correlation between the classes of drugs which are known to be effective in treating those disorders and, in fact, the disorders for which they are being prescribed. We find only 3 percent of the minor tranquilizer category being prescribed for schizophrenia, one of the major psychiatric disorders. The minor tranquilizers should be used in treatment of anxiety neurosis, a less severe disorder. This is the kind of data that leads me to the conclusion that overall this is a rational use of that class of drugs.

Somewhat surprising at first glance is the frequency with which these representative drugs are employed in nonpsychiatric diagnoses. Sixty-four percent of all prescriptions for the antidepressant category are for psychiatric diagnoses but only 10 percent for the representative drug in the sedative category. In the minor tranquilizer category the percentage ranges between 25 and 34 while for major tranquilizers there is a 50-percent use for mental disorders.

The caveat presented earlier, however, must be kept in mind before any conclusions are reached regarding the appropriateness or inappropriateness of these therapeutic practices.

Chart 6 presents data on the same representative drugs of the major psychotropic classes but this time cross-tabulated with desired action rather than diagnosis.

(Chart 6 follows:)