

Binder said that a similar number of students agree the gifts should not be accepted but are reluctant to give up the \$40.

In a letter published in the Nov. 14 issue of the New England Journal of Medicine, 36 Western Reserve University medical students said they were declining gifts offered in similar circumstances.

The Harvard students were also influenced by a seminar on the relation of the pharmaceuticals industry to the medical profession, conducted by Dr. Richard Burack, clinical associate in Medicine, whom Pohl called "the Ralph Nader of the medical profession."

Burack said yesterday he thought the students' action was very wise. "I'm beginning to wonder whether it's proper for doctors' professional actions to be guided by advertising at all," he said.

Pohl attempted to return the kits to Lilly's Prudential Center office Friday, but a secretary told him he was not authorized to accept them and asked him to return today.

[From the Washington Daily News, Feb. 4, 1969]

GETTING UNHOOKED

(By John Herling)

The patient-doctor relationship seems about to take on new meaning. Many of the young doctors of the nation have now decided that no third party—like a drug company—shall stand between them and their ethical prescriptions to the American public.

For years now the American drug industry has administered tender, loving care—solicited and unsolicited—to young medical students by way of gifts and other "things of value." The gifts were not merely sample drugs—and other "educational" material—but substantial things like stethoscopes, black bags and percussion hammers to test the reflexes.

Medical students at Western Reserve Medical School in Cleveland, and the Harvard Medical School in Boston, have now bade the drug companies to cease and desist from sending them donations. They have decided to ship the loot back to the drug company which happily showered such benefactions upon them.

Over the weekend, Harvard medical students, in a dramatic onset of virtue—a third of the school—held a "pile in" of medical instruments at a dormitory. The leaders of the "giveback" to the drug companies are two Harvard medical students: Richard L. Pohl of Lynbrook, N.Y., and Andrew Binder, of Boston.

In a news conference, the student spokesmen announced they had written a letter of rejection to the Eli Lilly Co., of Indianapolis, one of the nation's leading drug companies. They have concluded, they told the corporation, that a doctor ought not be a recipient of goodies from a drug company any more than should an official who awards contracts accept gifts from bidders. They also might have added that under the Taft-Hartley Law a union officer would be guilty of an unfair labor practice if he received a "thing of value for services which are not performed, or not to be performed."

The Lilly Co. appears to be one of many drug companies that typically ply young doctors with rather costly professional instruments. In fact, the practice has become so "normal" that medical students themselves frequently request such gifts from the companies.

But Harvard and Western Reserve medical students have now said goodbye to all that. They say a doctor's behavior must conform to ethical standards not only in the traditional mode of the Hippocratic Oath, but in the avoidance of the more subtle forms of temptation which could undermine the integrity of the medical profession.

In their letter to the drug company, Messrs Pohl and Binder acknowledged that as recently as last year students had actually invited gifts of medical instruments, an act of solicitation which they now consider to have been a mistake. In all candor, they acknowledge that the medical profession itself is largely to blame for the failure to keep the "proper distance from the industry . . . essential for the doctor's objectivity" in writing prescriptions.

On this whole issue, the American Medical Association has not yet talked up. But the ethical stethoscope is beginning to register murmurs in the student bodies of other medical schools.