

enough to invest heavily in advertising, including gifts, have a better chance at being successful, and, conversely, that companies that advertise and give gifts do so to enlarge their profits. Advertising has, in fact, taken on added significance to the medical profession in that for the most part there is no other compendium of drug information than the Physician's Desk Reference, which is composed of advertisements bought at the rate of \$115 per column inch. This book and some of the brochures of drug companies are given away and are used by doctors as a source of objective information.

When we say that "We are struck by the fact that it is the consumer who ultimately pays for these gifts in the form of higher prices," we do not mean that the cost of giving medical gifts is the factor which makes the cost of drugs so high. The point here is that because of the relationship which the gifts and other advertisements succeed in bringing about, the drug companies are able to charge higher prices.

Now, there was some question before about whether intelligent students can be influenced by getting gifts, and I do not think it is a matter of intelligence. I do not think it is that simple, and I would like to tell you how I feel that this influence is brought about. The high prices are related to the unique arrangement of drug sales, where third parties are paying. The following quote delineates this situation nicely:

Perhaps it is most realistic to think of the prescribing physician as our customer, for the use of our product is almost entirely dependent on him and consequently the great bulk of our marketing effort is directed toward him.

The drug company, in forming a relationship with the doctor in which the doctor comes to know and trust that particular company, has established an access to sales that is not affected by the price of the drug.

When we first published our letter, many doctors and students wrote in saying that it was insulting and incorrect to imply that physicians were so weakminded as to be influenced by gifts. I have already stated why I believe this objection to be beside the point, and bring it up to illustrate the nature of the drug company-medical student relationship. We have a situation where, in many ways, it can be shown that doctors are indeed influenced by advertising, and yet, when this is pointed out, everyone involved says he is not influenced. How does it happen? I can only speak from my personal experience thus far and state the conjectured results which prompted myself and some of my classmates to decide not to become a party to this mutually profitable relationship.

When a student enters medical school, drug names and drug company names are fairly foreign to him. He is in a position to learn what is significant with few biases. Although pharmacology lecturers uniformly use generic names of drugs, by the second or third year there are few students who do not know the names of the same several large drug companies, and also the brand names of many important drugs. The third year student feels that he has been exposed to much of the basic pharmacology in medicine and the fact that he has not heard of a company or product may make him feel that it is of dubious importance. Knowing the names of these companies and believing them to comprise all of the legitimate pharmaceutical industry comes about, I believe, because students have been exposed to these companies' names