

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX I

STATEMENT OF EDWARD R. PINCKNEY, M.D.

I am Dr. Edward R. Pinckney and I am here at your request to discuss the role of medical advertising in relation to the practicing physician's knowledge of drug use—that is, the role the pharmaceutical company plays in its attempt to influence rather than honestly educate the doctor who prescribes drugs. There is no question that drug advertising has a profound effect on both the cost as well as the quality of medical care by causing overuse and misuse of drugs. The one particular aspect of drug promotion I would like to emphasize is the role of the scientific medical publication that carries medical ads within its pages and the influence of those ads on the doctor, which eventually reflect on the health and safety of the doctor's patient.

In the past 15 years I have been an editor of five different medical journals, including *The Journal of the American Medical Association*. I have written, and had published, more than 100 scientific articles and editorials in medical journals, and I have written (jointly with another physician) one book for the medical profession. I have written four other medical books and authored a daily and Sunday newspaper column for the general public all stressing how best to utilize physicians, drugs, and other medical services. Academically, I have held professorial positions on the faculty of two medical colleges, and while teaching at Northwestern University Medical School, I was chairman of Preventive Medicine and Director of the Comprehensive Medical Clinic. I have also been in the private practice of medicine, specializing in internal medicine.

To begin, I would like to state that in spite of any laws or regulations that now exist that allegedly control medical advertising, it is my opinion that the primary responsibility for the ethical and accurate advertising of drugs to the medical profession lies within, and on, the editorial board—and especially the editor—of the medical journal that carries the advertisement. I say this because the medium of the scientific journal is really the only medium over which there can be peer control and especially because this is the one medium that can command the professional respect of the practicing physician. (Unfortunately, many physicians do not “respect” governmental agencies.) I unhesitatingly state that the problems related to drugs, such as their use without proper scientific indication or the use of combinations that tend to cause more harm than good or even the dangerous “side effects” that offset the intended therapy, come more from the lack of ethical standards within the leading medical organization than from a manufacturer trying to make a profit from his product.

To be sure, there is the standard cliché retort by some physicians that drug use can only be decided by the prescribing physician at the moment of diagnosis and that only prescribing physicians can take into account all the various judgemental factors that exist at that time that lead to the drug to be used. Of course, there can be no argument about this; at the same time, it is my belief that this same physician's judgment has been wrongly influenced by what he has read in advertisements for the drugs he uses. And, since most physicians learn about drugs, especially the newer drugs, through advertising it is not wrong to concentrate on this medium of information.

Mention must be made at this point of the “detail man” or drug company representative who visits the doctor personally to promote his company's products. Even with laws on the books, it is virtually impossible to control the detail man's “pitch.” While it is a known fact that drug companies spend the major portion of their advertising dollar on “detail men,” what is not often publicized is why. Simply put, this is the one approach to the doctor where there need be no negative emphasis on the drug being “pushed.” I