

professionalism would have allowed such a disservice to the medical profession. At this point it seems quite proper, and most appropriate, to discuss the AMA in relation to its evident honesty, authenticity and accuracy. Since it is my belief that unless and until the AMA takes the lead in setting standards for ethical advertising, no other form of medical advertising will feel it has to conform to any ideals, I do think a few examples of how the AMA operates, in connection with its publications, are in order.

Let us look at another example of the apparent dishonesty that seems to result in that conflict between the editorial and the business side of medical publications. For many years the AMA has sent out, *free* (the AMA uses the word complimentary), two, not one mind you, but two, copies of *Today's Health* magazine to every AMA member. Now, it is recognized that one indication to a potential advertiser whether he wants to advertise in a magazine is that magazine's *paid* circulation or the number of people evidently willing to put out their own money to buy the magazine. The greater the paid circulation, the greater the chance that the reader will actually go through the pages and see the advertisement; the more consumers that will be reached. If, therefore, you want to impress an advertiser in order to solicit his business, what you need to do is show a real reader interest in your publication. Can you imagine a potential advertiser's attention if your paid circulation suddenly—almost overnight—more than doubles? I am not talking about an increase from 3,000 to 6,000, I am talking about 350,000 to over 700,000! Well this is what happened to *Today's Health* several years ago. When the AMA decided to send out *two* free copies of *Today's Health* to all its members, it suddenly showed a rise in *paid* circulation of about 400,000. And it so reported these figures to the Post Office Department year after year, as required by law. Yet, in spite of the fact that such a statement was false and even though this matter was brought to the attention of the Post Office Department, nothing was done to the AMA to make it tell the truth. For if the truth were known, the required statement of circulation would indicate more free copies than paid for copies.

To be sure, the AMA can claim the *two* free magazines are part of its dues structure, but it has, in print, said these are "complimentary" copies. And the membership was never asked if it wanted the magazine in return for payment of dues.

Because we are discussing the AMA publication, *Today's Health*, I would like to give another indication of the accuracy and authenticity of the information published by the AMA. In the February, 1969, issue of *Today's Health*, the last two lines on page 78 read: "Date over-the-counter drug supplies when you buy them. Some lose their effectiveness when they are stored, or they may become toxic." Now this is an extremely serious statement for the AMA to make. If it is true, then it should be documented by the use of names of products that could become poisonous after any period of time. If it is not true, then the AMA should be taken to task for such irresponsibility. I tried to obtain additional information directly from the AMA but to no avail. I then asked a former editor of *Today's Health* who was returning to the AMA to secure the source of this startling statement as well as the names of such products. He told me, after a vain attempt within AMA headquarters that there did not seem to be any basis for this alarming pronouncement—other than to entice people to get rid of "old" drug products and buy new ones.

I do think this committee will agree that if there are any products being sold over-the-counter that prospective patients can easily obtain and that might, at a later date, specifically be the cause of illness, the medical profession should be made aware of same. I then contacted the FDA and was told they knew of *no* basis for the AMA's statement. Just as I have tried to emphasize the fact that the AMA is not strict and responsible about what they allow advertised in their publications, so do I feel that such a profound, yet seemingly erroneous, declaration published in *Today's Health* is another concrete example of AMA irresponsibility.

To go back to the matter of paid circulation of AMA publications and the relation of allegedly paid subscribers to advertising revenue. When I was on the *JAMA* editorial staff, there was a definite problem with the circulation of other AMA scientific publications. Some were so small (only a few thousand paid subscribers) as to be relatively unprofitable to the AMA. In addition, the small circulation tended to keep authors from submitting manuscripts for these "specialty" journals of the AMA (papers submitted to *JAMA* were shunted to other journals to supply them with editorial content.)