

TABLE I.—PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF ANSWERS FROM ALL DOCTORS

Choice of answers	Most informative and/or most acceptable	Least informative and/or least acceptable
	1st choice or no rank ¹	1st choice or no rank ¹
Direct mail advertising.....	6	67
Drug detailman.....	46	13
Exhibits at medical meetings, etc.....	20	8
Advertising in medical journals.....	19	12
Other.....	9	0
Total number of doctors replying.....	521	521

¹ To the question on "Most acceptable" 16 doctors gave more than 1 answer but did not rank them; both answers are included in totals and percentage calculations. Similarly, for "Least acceptable", 39 doctors gave 2 unranked replies and these are included.

The questions can be grouped into three main categories: (a) general, (b) those dealing with the sources of drug information, and (c) those seeking opinions as to the quality of drug information.

Question 1—Which of the following drug promotion methods do you think usually is most informative and/or most acceptable? and Which of the following drug promotion methods do you think is least informative and/or least acceptable?

Analysis showed that 56% of the general practitioners replying to this question considered the drug detailmen most informative and/or acceptable and 76% indicated that direct mail advertising is least informative and/or acceptable. Not so many specialists (37%) appeared to find the drug detailmen most informative or acceptable, and not quite as many (59%) reacted adversely to direct mail.

Fig. 1 summarizes the reactions of all doctors replying and shows clearly that, taken separately, the method of drug promotion most informative and/or acceptable involves the drug detailmen, whereas the least informative and/or acceptable is direct mail advertising.

It is realized, of course, that some of the reactions expressed to this and several other questions may have been coloured by the impressions made on doctors by the drug detailmen and direct mail arriving in the office just before the questionnaire. But the answers given lead us to conclude that in many cases these opinions are held strongly and were not prompted by the questions themselves.

Question 2—Which of the following do you think most influences you to use a drug for the first time?

From these results it would appear that most doctors like to obtain information on new drugs from their colleagues (Table II). Continuing education programs dealing with pharmacology and therapeutics could supply at least some of this information.

TABLE II.—PREFERRED SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON NEW DRUGS

Choice of answers	Distribution of answers	Percent
Manufacturer's written advertising (direct mail, advertisements in Journals, etc.).	Specialists.....	6
	General practitioners.....	3
	All doctors.....	4
Manufacturer's spoken advertising (detailman, exhibits, etc.).....	Specialists.....	18
	General practitioners.....	31
	All doctors.....	24
Colleague or consultant recommendation.....	Specialists.....	57
	General practitioners.....	54
	All doctors.....	56
Patient request.....	Specialists.....	2
	General practitioners.....	1
	All doctors.....	1
Other.....	Specialists.....	19
	General practitioners.....	11
	All doctors.....	15

Note: Total number of doctors replying, 521.