

TABLE V.—ASSESSMENT OF DIRECT MAIL ADVERTISING

Quotations from replies	Distribution of answers percent
Waste of time and/or money.....	38
Useless; of little value; can do without.....	36
Too much volume; too much repetition; too long.....	27
Sometimes useful.....	19
Annoying.....	15
Inadequate; inaccurate; misleading.....	12
Too promotional; gaudy.....	5
Of little interest to practice, or no interest to practice.....	4
Wants reprints or reviews only.....	3
Wants file cards or standard brochure once.....	3
To announce new drug only.....	2
Total number of doctors answering.....	518

Using these and other quotations it was found possible to classify the answers into three groups: (a) mostly favourable, (b) mixed or indifferent, and (c) negative or hostile (Table VI). In some cases when the answer was mostly negative or hostile but the reply to the preceding question indicated that the physician tried to read some or all of this mail, the reply was classified as "mixed". It is noteworthy that only 3% of the specialists and 1% of the general practitioners did not express an opinion in reply to this question.

TABLE VI.—REACTION TO DIRECT MAIL ADVERTISING

[In percent]

Category of reply	Specialists	General practitioners
Negative or hostile.....	68	67
Mixed or indifferent.....	23	27
Mostly favorable.....	9	6
Total answers.....	259	250

Canadian doctors may have been influenced in their reactions to drug advertising by the 1960 report of the Committee on Pharmacy to The Canadian Medical Association (3). After the appearance of this report, Kelly (4) summarized what believed to be the attitude of most doctors to the "flood of direct mail advertising" by pointing out that: "it is so voluminous that only the most conscientious recipient opens each piece before consigning it all to the waste basket . . . most of it constitutes outstanding examples of the printer's and lithographer's art which conveys the impression of great expense and consequent wastefulness . . . it appears so expensive that doctors feel that it may contribute materially to the cost of prescribed drugs to the patients . . . it produces in the minds of many doctors an unfavourable image of the firm which sponsors it."

Since that report, efforts to improve this medium were certainly made by some of the pharmaceutical companies and the total volume has been reduced. The fact remains, however, that in 1966 over two-thirds of 509 doctors still reacted in a negative or hostile manner to direct mail advertising and a total of 65% stated that they rarely read, rarely saw, or immediately discarded mailed drug advertising. These reactions to our questionnaire are different from those reported by the Canadian Facts Company who claimed from their survey (2) that "only 16% of doctors allowed anyone else to discard any of their pharmaceutical mail before they themselves saw it . . . as many as 70% gave an affirmative answer to the question 'Do you make a point of trying at least to look at all your advertising mail? . . . only 36% expressed any dissatisfaction with the selection of mail sent to them'".

Question 7. How would you grade most detailmen with regard to the following attributes?

Table VII shows that the majority of doctors rated most detailmen favourably (i.e., "good" or "excellent") as to personality (86%), reliability (65%) and honesty (69%); not so favourably (i.e., "fair" or "poor") in the categories of general knowledge (67%), knowledge of drugs (63%) and usefulness (59%).