

CHAPTER 2. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The Fond du Lac Study was authorized the end of September 1954. Between the authorization of the study and our talk on the study to the Pharmaceutical Advertising Club of New York in April 1955 the following study steps were completed:

Selection of the Marketing Area

It was decided that the marketing area would have to be located in the Middle West, since each of the other geographical areas seem to possess stronger regional characteristics. Several dozen potential markets were considered and discarded because of various factors which would have made the completion of the field work more difficult or impossible.

Wisconsin was recommended by Dr. Frank Dickinson of the AMA on the basis that it has one of the best state medical statistical reporting offices in the country. Mr. Earl Thayer, the Public Information Director of the Wisconsin State Medical Society, discussed possibilities for selection and finally concluded that the Fond du Lac area was the best one for our purposes, since it is reasonably close to the U. S. average in terms of population per active physician (U. S. 958, Oshkosh, Appleton, Fond du Lac, Primary Center, 1180) hospital beds per thousand population, proportions of various specialties of physicians, mixture of agricultural and industrial employment, and lack of predominating nationality extractions. The fact that this community is insulated from strong university influence, though not isolated; the fact that nearly all of the doctors in the area are on the staff of the same hospital, belong to the same county medical society, and in general are exposed to the same influences to a much more equal degree than in other markets that were considered -- all of these factors led to choice of Fond du Lac.

Preliminary Investigation of the Fond du Lac Market

A preliminary investigation of the marketing area was made, statistics were gathered on the composition of the market and interviews were made with each of the 14 pharmacies in the area, all but one of which agreed to cooperate on the study. We learned from other sources that this one exception accounted for probably fewer than ten prescriptions per month.

The fact that the study director had lived in this test market was of considerable help both in understanding some of the influences which might not have otherwise been understood and in obtaining the cooperation of the large number of people without whose help the study would have been impossible.

Personal Discussions with Manufacturers

On the basis of our talks with the Fond du Lac pharmacists, we made a preliminary list of fourteen drugs in various fields of therapy which seemed suitable on a tentative basis. We then discussed the concept of the study, Fond du Lac as the tentative market in the study, the list of tentative drugs, and the willingness of the manufacturer to cooperate with fourteen advertising managers of pharmaceutical manufacturing firms. Mr. Richard L. Hull of Smith, Kline & French was very helpful on reviewing the tentative drug selections. As the result of these talks, final selection of the drugs to be studied was made.