

Developing Study Plan and Procedures

Many people with whom we discussed the study during the following weeks made helpful suggestions regarding the study plan and procedures. Among these were Mr. Gerald L. Long and Mr. Spencer M. Fossell of the New York Pharmaceutical Advertising Club.

During March and April of 1955 we finalized the study plan and procedures. We decided first to interview each of the 55 physicians using a formal questionnaire which basically covered the same information as that in the 1953 national study on advertising and the American physician. This questionnaire was modified to include questions regarding the specific drugs to be studied.

We planned also to audit prescriptions in all Fond du Lac pharmacies to end up with a separate IEL card for each prescription on the five drugs we were studying and the principle competitive drugs in each of these groups. By this method we could analyze not only the total sales figures for each drug but also by individual physicians and we could study practices of individual physicians regarding the drugs separately and in relation to each other.

Armed with the background information on each physician, and with a table showing what prescriptions the physician wrote during the audit period, we would then go back to the physician for an informal discussion interview during which we would probe into the factors which led him to do what he did.

In April 1955 we outlined the final study plans in a talk to the New York Pharmaceutical Advertising Club.

Physician Background Interviews

The physician background interviews were completed during May 1955.

The questions asked in the background interviews are reproduced below. The booklet referred to in the questions was merely a convenient method of placing the lists of advertising media, drugs, medical journals, and pharmaceutical company house organs, in front of the physician for his consideration.