

CHAPTER 3. WHAT THE STUDY MEANS

We believe that the Fond du Lac Study is a pioneering study in several ways: in subject matter, in methodology, in intensity, and in conclusions.

It is one of the first studies attempting to get at how to improve marketing communication with physicians.

It combines a number of innovations in method, starting with the promotion program of the manufacturer and following the prescription audit with interpretive personal interviews of the prescribers.

It investigates the Fond du Lac medical community most thoroughly, using every technique that would conceivably add to understanding.

It contains conclusions of far reaching importance, and the five principles which it offers as an approach to a science of pharmaceutical marketing can have marked influence upon pharmaceutical advertising and promotion.

Not A Sample Survey

The Fond du Lac Study is not a sample survey. It is a complete study of a single marketing area -- including every physician, the only hospital, the detail man for the products studied, every pharmacy (but one), and every prescription of certain ethical drugs filled there during four full-week periods.

We have taken a microcosm and placed it under the microscope, as it were, to see how it works. From looking at it first one way and then another we have learned a great deal that we could not have hoped to learn through the typical, large-scale, national study.

Not Necessarily Projectible

The findings on the five drug in the Fond du Lac area are not necessarily projectible to the national market. They are the facts in Fond du Lac; they may prove to be true nationally; but we would neither operate on that assumption nor advise others to do so. As far as the national market is concerned the Fond du Lac Study provides hypotheses for further testing.

For example, we would urge the executives at Ciba not to assume that three-quarter of their Sorpasil sales come from internists nationally, just because that was the case in Fond du Lac. We suspect that Sorpasil is predominantly an internists' drug but, until verified, our suspicion is only a theory. The same reservation must be held for the other specific findings in the Fond du Lac market.

We hope in future studies to be able to test whether the hypotheses hold true on a national basis and to what extent they need to be modified to fit the larger market.