

You are asked later, then, why don't you tell them? And you say "Well, they might get, if you tell them they have headaches then they have headaches," and so on and so forth.

Then the counsel asked, "Well, if you warn them they may get blood clots, would that warning induce them to get blood clots?"

This testimony indicates that you have not, at least as of that time, warned your patients of the risks.

Dr. KISTNER. I am afraid you have misinterpreted the testimony. The question that was asked me by Mr. McIntyre was whether I discussed the side effects with them. Isn't that correct, Mr. McIntyre.

Senator MCINTYRE. I will reread the question.

Dr. KISTNER. Please don't rephrase it.

Senator MCINTYRE. No, sir.

[Laughter.]

Senator MCINTYRE. Dr. Kistner, the labeling of all oral contraceptives now contain a long list of potential side effects of varying severity and a listing of certain conditions under which the drugs should not be used. In your own practice do you regularly inform a woman of these potential side effects and question her concerning any of these preexisting conditions before starting her on the pill?

Dr. KISTNER. Yes, and I said yes, and I take a history, and if there are predisposing factors or contraindications, she doesn't get it and I tell her about the side effects plus a weight gain edema and I may even give prescriptions for this. But the testimony just read here has to do with complications. If you ask if I sit down and I take this out and I say "now, I want you to know that you may die of blood clotting or you may get hepatitis or you may get this, that or the other thing" and besides that the only thing that has been said today as far as ipso facto evidence is that of blood clotting, then I would say no. I don't believe it is good medical practice with any medication to go through the list of possible complications.

If I prescribed this particular tranquilizer I wouldn't read off this list of complications. I would tell the patient "Now, you may get dizzy from taking this. I don't want you to drive," but I wouldn't list to her the total list of complications, and the testimony was in regard to complications, and on my direct reply to the interrogator was that if the patient asked me about the risk then I would tell her about that.

Senator MCINTYRE. Well, Doctor, there is one thing that occurs to me, could you distinguish for me the difference between a side effect and a complication?

Dr. KISTNER. Yes.

A side effect of a drug is one that is generally accepted as occurring in some individuals as an undesirable effect other than that for which the drug is given. If one takes estrogen, one frequently becomes nauseated, estrogen "pulls in" sodium and some women don't excrete the excess fluid and they become edematous and "blow up." These are side effects; but if a woman takes estrogen and gets a blood clot and dies that is a complication.

Senator MCINTYRE. That is more than a complication.

[Laughter.]

Dr. KISTNER. Well, that is the difference. I think if you asked me to explain the difference, I did.