

Mr. GORDON. Absolutely safe?

Dr. KASSOUF. Yes. Well, I do not think we should bother minor reactions or little irritations in this kind of a discussion. If you want to include those small events as issues of safety, then I have to withdraw my argument. But I am talking about serious reactions.

Mr. GORDON. You could run this into the ground, too. If it causes a headache, it could still be safe.

Dr. KASSOUF. Yes.

Mr. GORDON. What you are saying, as I understand it, is you have to be selective about this. Some cause death, aplastic anemia, thromboembolism, which is serious to the body, serious illness.

Dr. KASSOUF. I would say, perhaps, it is a disservice to give the public the idea that every drug has lethal effect or can have a lethal effect. I do not think the experience to date justifies that.

Now, perhaps, someone will be able to tell me about a death with the mumps vaccine, and I will retract the statement.

Mr. DUFFY. Doctor, let me just return to my original premise. My understanding is, then, that you are a practicing physician.

Dr. KASSOUF. Yes, sir.

Mr. DUFFY. What type of practice?

Dr. KASSOUF. Internal medicine.

Mr. DUFFY. You did not conduct research in any type or form?

Dr. KASSOUF. No, sir; it is hard enough to keep up my practice.

Mr. DUFFY. Is it my understanding that the members of the FDA committee who concluded that the pill was safe, were men who are research-oriented, they are not practicing physicians in the sense you are a practicing physician, these are men who have actually gone out and studied the problem under controlled clinical conditions with large numbers of patients and have specifically dealt with the problems associated with the pill for long periods of time?

Dr. KASSOUF. Some of them are academic physicians, yes. I cannot give you the number.

Mr. DUFFY. And you say it is their conclusion, as people who have gone about, actually firsthand, to study this problem—

Mr. GORDON. Not every one of them.

Senator McINTYRE. Go ahead. Proceed.

Mr. DUFFY. It is their conclusion that the pill is safe.

Now, you are a practicing physician, having done no research; would you challenge their admitted expertise?

Dr. KASSOUF. I read their report.

Mr. DUFFY. So you feel that that is a substitute for research in this particular case?

Dr. KASSOUF. No. I think it is a reason to contest their decision. In their report they found a risk. They did not find safety. In 1969, for the first time, they have documented a risk and the conclusion is that it is safe. I think that is hard for me to understand.

Now, maybe the others understand it, but I do not.

Mr. DUFFY. In other words, really what you are saying is you cannot understand the conclusion and, therefore, you will not accept it.

Dr. KASSOUF. Well, accepting or rejecting the conclusion really is not the total issue. We are debating, I presume, the meaning of their studies.