

Senator DOLE. How widespread has your own experience been?

Dr. HELLMAN. It is fairly widespread, sir, because we have a very large clinic. Although I do not see all these patients personally, I see the data. As I said to you, there are 4,000 new patients a year come into this clinic for family planning. The figures are as follows—and I got them last week for you:

Of the patients in this group, 55 percent have intrauterine devices; 40 percent are on oral contraceptives; and 5 percent are on traditional methods of contraception, mostly the diaphragm.

Senator NELSON. How do you account for that statistic when I understood you to say earlier that there were perhaps a million people on the IUD nationally and 8.5 on the pill? If it is 8.5 to 1, why, in your clinic, is it 55 percent IUD and 40 percent on the pill?

Dr. HELLMAN. I have a man in my department who has developed an intrauterine device who works in this clinic. I think this is the answer.

Senator NELSON. I am sure you are not saying he prescribes it because he has it.

Dr. HELLMAN. Well, I think seriously, he believes that this is a very good device and a very effective one.

Senator DOLE. You have had a chance, then, many opportunities to personally observe or study the side effects, whether it is diabetes or thromboembolism or cancer. What have been the side effects, in your personal experience, as far as your own patients are concerned?

Dr. HELLMAN. My private patients have had no serious adverse effects from the pill. They come off the pill because of a host of minor reactions. The most prevalent one is weight gain. The modern American girl just does not want to gain 5 or 10 pounds if she can help it.

Other reasons are breakthrough bleeding, headaches, and a general complaint that these pills "made me feel pregnant all the time and I do not want to feel that way."

Some of them have come off the pill because of what they have read in the press or what their husbands have read in the press. Each time that one of our reports came out or the newspapers begin to print information, we always get a significant withdrawal of patients from the oral contraceptives. Whether they come back or not, I do not know.

There are interesting data in this regard: I have been bombarded by obstetricians and gynecologists around the United States since your committee has been meeting because they are being bombarded by their patients and they want to know whether there is anything different coming up.

I checked in our clinic last Monday or Tuesday, and asked whether we have had any withdrawal of patients from the oral contraceptives in the clinic. Strangely enough, we have had none. Now, I have no explanation for this except that we are treating patients from the ghetto and they think of us as the "establishment" and they do not believe what we say.

Senator DOLE. In this group, I think you mentioned 55 percent used IUD's, 40 percent the pill.

Dr. HELLMAN. Yes.

Senator DOLE. How do you personally compare the side effects of the IUD versus the pill? You mentioned that the IUD has some side effects earlier.