

Senator McINTYRE. Along that line, Doctor, are we in a position to come up with what the chairman is suggesting here, and what we might term a crash program? Are we in a position, do we know enough, to really hit this from all sides with a real controlled study?

Dr. CORFMAN. A crash program on the medical effects of oral contraceptives?

Senator McINTYRE. On oral contraceptives.

Dr. CORFMAN. Well, we certainly need increased work in this field. I think that the biological situation is such that some of the answers require a good deal of time. The best example is the cancer problem.

As you know from the testimony it takes a long time for proven carcinogens to cause tumors in humans. We may be a little early in launching our cancer of the breast studies, for instance, but we want to establish a baseline of information as well as pick up any changes which may have occurred by now.

Senator McINTYRE. Well, what you are saying is like an old problem I have run into many times, and that is you just cannot throw a lot of money into the problem and hope to solve it in a year or so. You indicate your studies are not in such an advanced position that you could go all out. But, of course, as you have indicated in your receptiveness to the chairman's question, you would welcome an opportunity to increase our scientific research and controlled studies on trying to come up with some answers as to whether this pill is safe or not.

Dr. CORFMAN. Yes, sir.

Senator NELSON. I think probably the most frequent observation by witnesses before the committee has been that we do not have the facts, we do not have adequate programs outlining the facts partly because of the additional question that you suggest, that some of the answers you could not get, involving cancer, for example, which is a time question. But everybody has agreed we have inadequate accumulation of statistics and inadequate programs of evaluating and seeking these statistics. We certainly think it is important enough so that it should be called to the attention of the Congress as to what would be desirable, and my guess is that you would get a very positive response.

Did you complete your statement?

Dr. CORFMAN. Yes, I did, sir.

Senator McINTYRE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Corfman, in describing the various metabolic effects of the oral contraceptives surveyed by your task force you pointed out that jaundice occurs in about one woman in every 10,000 taking the pill, but that the disease subsides after discontinuation of the medication. The liver function tests return to normal several weeks after treatment is discontinued.

Now, this is an effect of the pill which we have had very little testimony about thus far. Did you find any evidence that the oral contraceptives can cause or have caused permanent liver damage?

Dr. CORFMAN. We found no significant evidence of permanent liver damage. In fact, most of the women who do become jaundiced have had some history of liver disease or of jaundice itself.