

Does the user of the pill in America know this?

Dr. GUTTMACHER. No, sir; she would not get much if she read that, either. That is the difficulty. I have been in active practice for 25 years as a private practitioner, and in addition, a full-time chief of service for 10 years. I have had contact with thousands of patients in my long medical life. Unfortunately the physician has to make the decisions for patients. You may discuss this with the patient at considerable length, and usually, when the discussion is over and you are talking about a particular therapy or operation, the patient will look at you and say, "What shall I do?"

Now, I do not think that you are going to be able to educate the American woman as to what she should or should not do with regard to the pill. I think you can educate the American doctor. He is educatable. I think that the average doctor certainly has not read this volume of Salhanick, and I think that much of the information which is in there might be new to the American physician.

I think on the other hand the American physician is a conscientious man. I do not think that he willfully threatens the life of his patient. I think he probably is so overwhelmed by his medical practice and the normal activities of making a living that he tries to get his medical information in capsule form and he is very likely to take the particular throwaway literature which comes across the desk, not seldom, from the pharmaceutical firms.

Senator NELSON. Not seldom?

Dr. GUTTMACHER. Not seldom, from the pharmaceutical firms.

Now, I certainly feel that the more we can instruct the American physician about the intricacies of the birth control pill, the wiser the effort. My feeling is that when you attempt to instruct American womanhood in this, which is a pure medical matter which I am afraid she has not the background to understand, you are creating in her simply a panic reaction without much intellectual background. And this is what I think has been unfortunate.

I do not accuse these hearings of any diabolical purpose, but I must say that the reaction of the American public, parading this across the news media, particularly with the news media picking out those portions which are inflammatory, have done a great deal of harm.

I think educating the American physician is absolutely commendable and important and necessary, and I think perhaps the American physician has been remiss in not trying to educate himself about the intricacies of the pill.

I feel that in our own clinics, Planned Parenthood, as I say in my testimony—but it appears at this point we ought to depart from it—I think in our own clinics we have been extremely vigilant, certainly in instructing our clinicians in the United States on what is considered to be a good practice in regard to examinations, Papanicolaou smear, breast examinations, and so forth, with the pill. As you see in my testimony, we had a directive on January 26, 1966, which is more than 4 years ago, in which we stressed this to the physicians working in our clinics.