

carry this out, whether he is going to be able to in this group, I cannot say.

Senator DOLE. Doctor, we all recognize that you indicate it is difficult to inform the patient by setting forth a list of the possible risks involved. Is the pill in this respect different from any other medication?

Is there anything different about the pill and hundreds of other medications? Is there anything about oral contraceptives where the problem of communication is any greater?

Dr. GUTTMACHER. I suppose not. Certainly, when it comes to aspirin, we know that we have gastric hemorrhages for aspirin. We have fatal cases of aspirin, even in people who are not taking a vast amount. But I feel that the pill probably is a pretty special kind of medicament.

Of course, other drugs have reactions. Certainly, we know of death from penicillin, one of the most widely used drugs, or virtually any drug you can name. Whether the rate from penicillin is higher than from the pill, I cannot answer; I do not know that.

On the other hand, as Senator Nelson has pointed out, this is a drug given to women who are in a state of good health. My reaction to those remarks is that this is a powerful combination of drugs given to women to prevent a most serious illness, and that is unwanted pregnancy. From my point of view, it is justified.

Now, you asked me whether special things should be done in, I suppose, packaging and labeling. I have the feeling that most patients do not read what is put into their pill packages or medicines, and if they do, they have some difficulty understanding it.

Again, my thesis goes back to the fact that your target should be the education of the American physician and that he has to take the responsibility of whether or not to prescribe the pill for Mrs. A or Miss B. This has to be his judgment. I would like to give him, equip him with all the knowledge possible so that he can make his judgment correctly and authoritatively.

I am all for educating the American medical profession. I have rather dim enthusiasm for attempting to educate the recipients of therapy. I think that the dispenser of the therapy is the person who must be educated and not the recipient.

Senator DOLE. We have an obligation to communicate the dangers to the dispenser, as you say. He should be aware, and then somewhere along the line, there should be a judgment based on the doctor-patient relationship made whether to use the pill, or whether, after having started the pill, to drop the use of the pill.

It might be well to have a copy of the information that is made available in your clinics for the record, to see how you approach the problem, what you may give the patient.

Dr. GUTTMACHER. Yes, I am sure we can furnish that.

(The material above-referred to, follows:)