

so much adverse publicity in the press. I cannot help but say that nothing really has materially changed. Millions of people were on the pill before the hearings were held, and nothing has happened, really, to their knowledge about the pill.

Facts and conjectures have been ventilated to physicians who had less knowledge of the pill and ventilated to a lay public which is allergic to all kinds of scare propaganda. I feel our task is to try to put the thing in perspective so that people realize that the pill is still, to me, a magnificent therapeutic agent which has tremendous necessity, until, as Senator Javits says, this 5-year span can be passed and we have much better and safer methods.

Senator NELSON. There is no use going back into that. It is just a question of whether you believe the people of the United States should have all the facts or whether they should not. In my view, I think they should. Many people concerned about the question are concerned that the facts are out; some people may decide not to use the pill and therefore raise the problem about population control. I do not think we ought to use individual persons for sociological purposes.

Would you agree with the letter sent out by Dr. Edwards, Acting Commissioner of Food and Drug Administration, sent about the 18th of January, in which he states:

In most cases, a full disclosure of the potential adverse effects of these products would seem advisable, thus permitting the participation of the patient in the assessment of the risk associated with this method.

Dr. GUTTMACHER. I am sorry, not admitting the patient? Is that what you said?

Senator NELSON. No, I am sorry. The quote I read is that in this letter sent to 324,000 doctors. The last sentence reads:

In most cases, a full disclosure of the potential adverse effects of these products would seem advisable, thus permitting the participation of the patient in the assessment of the risk associated with this method.

Do you agree or disagree?

Senator JAVITS. Do you not think the witness ought to see the letter?

Dr. GUTTMACHER. I can evaluate that. I have not seen it, but we have discussed it before. I think it places a great burden on the patient. I think it is impractical, sir. I think the physician has to make the decision.

As I have told you, in 35 years of active practice, I cannot pass decisions to patients. Patients pass decisions to me. It is very confusing to her when she tries to interpret my testimony and what went before. How is the poor patient to make the decision?

I think the doctor has to make the decision. I do not think such a disclosure is going to do much good. I think it is going to do great harm. But if Dr. Edwards wants to do it, I think he has a perfect right to do it. I do not want to build optimism that this is going to solve all our problems, because I think the patient, after she has read all of this, is going to come back to the doctor and say, what shall I do?

Senator NELSON. I was just asking for your observation. He sent it to 324,000 doctors.