

mucus. Recovery of hormonal balance is usually prompt after oral contraceptives are discontinued. Occasionally return of the menstrual cycle is delayed for 3 to 6 months or more. In such instances it is not known which cases represent persistent over-suppression of previously normal ovarian function and which represent preexisting hormonal imbalance and anovulation unless ovarian function has been evaluated prior to treatment.

No drugs can be considered completely safe. The risks of penicillin in causing serious reaction and death are widely known, yet penicillin is prescribed with great frequency by practicing physicians. The physician's knowledge is expected and relied upon to identify individuals sensitive to the drug and to provide an alternate drug for treatment when appropriate. Selection is just as important and feasible for oral contraceptives. The argument that such comparisons are invalid because oral contraceptives are not therapeutic agents or agents used in the prevention of illness is open to criticism. It depends to a large extent upon one's definition of illness. Medical and social benefits of such effective contraceptive agents are undeniable. Continuance of their use is warranted and in fact essential for many of our individual patients and certainly for our society. Even in their present less-than-ideal form appropriate selection among different oral contraceptive compounds or selection of entirely different methods of contraception when indicated is not only possible for a high percentage of patients but should constitute regular medical practice.

Senator NELSON. Thank you very much, Doctor, for your very fine testimony. We appreciate your taking the time to come today and having the patience to wait.

Did you have any questions?

Mr. DUFFY. No questions.

Senator NELSON. Mr. Gordon?

Mr. GORDON. I have none.

Senator NELSON. The hearings will resume on March 3 in the Caucus Room.

(Whereupon, at 12:55 p.m., the hearing was recessed to reconvene Tuesday, March 3, 1970, at 10 a.m.)