

necessitated by the use of the pill—and we have heard some additional medical procedures this morning in the form of periodic X-rays up to four times a year.

Senator DOLE. Dr. Ratner, are you in the practice of medicine now? Do you see patients?

Dr. RATNER. I am in the full-time practice of medicine as a public health physician specialist.

Senator DOLE. In this area of oral contraceptives?

Dr. RATNER. My patients are my community and I have to be concerned about everything that affects the health of my community. I have a community of 60,000 and we are a medical center.

Senator DOLE. How many do you see personally?

Dr. RATNER. I do not see patients personally.

Senator DOLE. You have not seen any patients for how long?

Dr. RATNER. I have not seen patients for at least 10 years, but I am a consultant to physicians, and I am a consultant to the public at large. My primary work is health education.

This is the primary work of a public health physician.

Senator DOLE. What do you base your statements on, with reference to the pill?

Dr. RATNER. Well, Senator, you know there are about a thousand medical periodicals that are published, and practically each one has an article on the pill each month. I happen to get about 20 periodicals in my office, and somebody has to take the time out to read what is being reported.

The private practicing physician does not have the time—

Senator DOLE. Have you done any research on the pill?

Dr. RATNER. No.

Senator DOLE. You do not do research; you do not have any patients; you read articles; is that your base of expertise?

Dr. RATNER. Senator, the reason we have medical literature is for people to keep up—

Senator DOLE. We have had a lot of medical literature in this committee, but I do not know if I have learned anything or not.

Dr. RATNER. We have scientific publications that are intended for physicians who have responsibilities directly to people. And this is the thing that I have as an obligation, as a health officer, to keep up with the medical literature to know what is going on, and this is what leads to epidemic intelligence.

On the basis of this I have sent out warnings to my physicians from time to time. So that they are getting the results of my screening of the medical literature.

Senator DOLE. They could learn the same thing by reading the same periodicals?

Dr. RATNER. A busy practicing physician hardly has time even to read his own specialty journals.

Senator DOLE. The point is that you have not done any great research in this field other than reading, you have not seen any patients—I assume you have not personally had any experience with any of the side effects, and I assume you are here as an expert witness with reference to the pill. I just wonder what you base that on.

Dr. RATNER. I base this on my expertness as a public health spe-