

Colonel Fairchild said, some of the drugs which are more expensive have been questioned at Walter Reed, but I certainly think you could put Walter Reed's committee up against any group in the country. They are eminently qualified physicians in their own right and in their fields. Put them up against any board, and I would go along with the Walter Reed group.

Senator NELSON. I have no basis for making a judgment one way or the other, but if I understand you correctly, you take the position that you cannot tell the doctors what to do. Therefore, even if you have the best experts in the world available to you, you can still get into your formulary drugs that the therapeutics committee say are no good, besides costing a lot more, because no one wants to offend the individual doctors. So it ends up that you can have a superb therapeutics committee and yet have a formulary that is not superior.

Now, I do not know what the Walter Reed Hospital formulary is and I would not be qualified to judge it. It may be one of the best in the country, but I still do not understand why you should worry about a doctor saying he has been using Librium, or any one of these other drugs, for many, many years and he finds it effective and wants to use it, while at the same time the therapeutics committee finds that the particular drug he wants is not superior and, in fact, is ineffective. The committee has the Medical Letter statements of the best clinicians and medical panels which have studied it. Certainly the therapeutics committee can say: here is what the panel of the USP and NF have decided to put into the official compendia for this purpose, unless you can produce some evidence based upon controlled clinical studies, you will have to use the drug in the formulary.

The physician is not much of a scientist if he is going to insist on using something if there is no scientific evidence of its superiority, is he?

Colonel FAIRCHILD. I believe that if we stick with Librium and Valium for a moment, that as the drug is evaluated and presented to the medical profession in the literature, that these articles, this evidence, is then used by the individual physician interpreted as absolutely correct and it is not until later after they have had a chance to evaluate the drug over many millions of patients can they state it is not as effective as, and it is at this particular point in time that the therapeutics agents board is presented with the request by the doctor to add it to his armamentarium.

So, at the time he presents his original request for Valium, Librium, et cetera, he has evidence or could not get it through the committee.

Senator NELSON. What is his evidence?

Colonel FAIRCHILD. His evidence is articles in the literature that support his particular need. Or perhaps—as I had the good fortune, I grew up with Dr. Dowling, rather, under Dowling, and I worked with him over here in D.C. General, so I had an experience with sulfisoxazole before it was known as Gantrisin while it still had a—it was called NU 445 at the time. And I had this experience and when I was ready to go out, I liked this drug. I had some fine experiences with it by a well known man, and I wanted to use it. And I thought at that particular time I had a right and justification to use it.