

I shall just conclude by saying that it seems to me the Department of Defense is in a position in its hospitals to establish the highest standard and have the doctors comply. If it can't be done there, those statistics will be the same 10 years from now.

Admiral ETTER. Senator, could I make one remark here. I certainly hope that those percentages are not used to rate the physicians practicing in the military today.

Senator NELSON. Not what?

Admiral ETTER. They are not used to rate the physicians practicing in the military today. We are citing here a large number of cases of people who apparently have been judged by their peers to be found wanting. I do not think that we can certainly apply those same kind of percentages to the practicing military physician today, particularly in our military hospitals.

Senator NELSON. Well, yours are civilian doctors, you told us, and the HEW study was a general study. We are talking about prescription drugs in an area where it has been incredibly complicated. There is no criticism of the brilliance or intelligence of an individual physician. It is just the question of who knows what these claims stand for. If I were a doctor and read the Journal of the AMA, and I see Chloromycetin advertised with a bronchoscope, which gives the indication it is for upper respiratory treatment, which it is not, and see it promoted widely for a broad spectrum of anti-infective purposes, and when the Journal says that its regulations require proof that it is effective and meets proper standards, I would probably prescribe it.

There is no way for me to know, even if I were a most brilliant physician, that in fact Chloromycetin was being widely misprescribed and overprescribed in this country just because of the promotion of the drug. With respect to control of prescribing practices, it seems to be agreed upon by all the experts in the field, that we establish a formulary based upon the best knowledge there is. Neither the Veterans' Administration nor the Department of Defense in my judgment, has at least done as good a job as they ought to, based upon the procedure you have followed.

With that happy note—did you have anything you wanted to add? I do not have any objection to your arguing with me, if you had something you wanted to add to that.

Admiral ETTER. I have nothing to add.

Senator NELSON. You had some material on the names of small businesses and so on that we asked for.

Admiral ETTER. Yes, sir.

Senator NELSON. I want to thank you very much, gentlemen, for your patience today.

Admiral ETTER. Thank you.

(The complete prepared statement of Admiral Etter, above-referred to, follows, together with attachments:)

STATEMENT OF REAR ADM. H. S. ETTER, MEDICAL CORPS, U. S. NAVY, CHAIRMAN,
DEFENSE MEDICAL MATERIEL BOARD

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, it is a pleasure to appear before this subcommittee to describe and discuss the manner in which the Department of Defense procures its drugs.