

Postal Survey

Shortly after the resolution was adopted by the Albemarle County Medical Society, copies were mailed to all members together with a postpaid card that queried physicians concerning their plans to use the recommended prescription forms, their opinion of the program and their interest in having it publicized in a suitable medical journal. Identifying signatures were requested on the cards.

Prescription Audit

A total of 3000 prescriptions, divided in groups of 1000, were analyzed during three separate intervals: March 28 to April 25, September 4 to October 15, and November 22 to December 28, 1968. The initial survey covered the period immediately before the passage of the joint resolution, and the latter two at intervals of three and six months after implementation.

Audits were conducted at two retail pharmacies. Store "A" is located in the immediate vicinity of the University. It could be expected that prescriptions being filled at this location would reflect prescription practices of physicians at the University Hospital and clinics, would be filled for patients representing a cross-section of the community and would also represent the prescribing habits of physicians in private practice since the store offered delivery services throughout the area. Store "B" was selected because it was located in the downtown area of the city, close to the local community hospital (Martha Jefferson), represented a survey site less under the influence of University prescribing practices, also offered delivery service throughout the community and drew its clientele from a cross-section of the community. On precoded forms information was then collected on study period, outlet, source of prescription, specific drug, generic or brand name, price and days covered by prescription size. Prescription prices were broken down by "cost per day," the cost of the prescription, the number of tablets or capsules prescribed and the number to be taken daily being used.

RESULTS

Physician-Opinion Survey

Responses to a mail survey of opinions regarding the joint resolution by members of the medical society are shown in Table 1. Replies were more complete from private practitioners than from members of the University staff. Both groups of respondents, however, indicated a positive attitude to the program in wanting to see it published. Physicians in private practice expressed willingness to follow the recommendations regarding prescription writing. The University staff already uses such forms. No formal survey of opinion of pharmacists concerning the resolution was conducted. Interviews indicated enthusiasm among many, and a somewhat more cautious approach by some. The overall attitude of the pharmacists was willingness to survey the generic drugs that they stocked to ensure high quality. A subcommittee of the pharmacists reviewed generic preparations already in stock to determine that they had been obtained from reliable sources.

TABLE 1.—RESPONSE BY MEMBERS OF THE MEDICAL SOCIETY TO A MAIL SURVEY OF OPINIONS REGARDING THE JOINT RESOLUTION

Survey	Private Practitioners		University Staff	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Inquiries mailed.....	103	100	217	100
Replies.....	68	66	55	25
Information should be published:				
Agree.....	52	76	40	73
Disagree.....	6	9	4	7
No response.....	10	15	11	20
Agree to use new prescription form:				
Will change.....	43	63		
Already used.....	12	18		
Will not change.....	8	12		
No response.....	5	7		