

in certain categories of drugs there has been controversy. We readily recognize this. I also readily admit to you that it is possible in submitting documentation to a therapeutics committee that selected portions of a bibliography are being submitted.

However, we must rely upon the sincerity and the professional judgments of the superior people in our hospitals settings to use good judgment for the protection of the patient and to insure the fact that the patient gets the maximum therapeutic benefit at the most reasonable cost.

Senator NELSON. Well, let's be more precise. Dr. Edward Freis, senior medical investigator at your own Washington, D.C., hospital, a member of the National Academy of Science—NRC panel on cardiovascular drugs stated as to Peritrate—that "The few controlled trials that have been done have failed to demonstrate that they are effective," referring to Peritrate and one other drug.

Then I asked him: "Do the controlled studies indicate that they are not effective?" "Dr. Freis: They are not effective compared to a placebo."

Now, here you say you are relying upon your senior people, and yet you have the testimony of Dr. Freis, senior medical investigator, who says that Peritrate is comparable to a placebo.

Dr. WELLS. Mr. Chairman, I know that Dr. Freis made that statement, because I read his testimony, also, but there are frank differences of opinion at high levels on this.

We have with us here Dr. J. N. Cohn, who is an expert in the field of cardiovascular disease treatment and I would like to have him speak to this. He is also an associate of Dr. Freis.

Dr. COHN. Senator Nelson, you will notice in Dr. Freis' statement that he said the few controlled studies that were performed, and while I would feel as strongly as you that we should be able to reach a rational decision whether a drug such as Peritrate is or is not effective, in a strong statement such as that there is still controversy. There are rational, knowledgeable people who feel that this drug is effective and have published papers on demonstrated effectiveness in uncontrolled studies.

Now, these are not acceptable as total scientific proof.

Unfortunately it is much easier to prove effectiveness of a drug than it is to prove ineffectiveness and in small controlled studies—

Senator NELSON. I didn't understand what you said.

Dr. COHN. It is easier to prove effectiveness of an agent than to prove categorically its ineffectiveness and the response of some knowledgeable people in the field to controlled studies showing no response would be, yes, the drug is not effective in all people and is not necessarily potent in a larger series, but in certain individuals the drug does work and therefore the physician wants to use it.

I personally do not use the drug but I cannot marshal any strong evidence to prove to another physician who quotes the literature and who states from the literature that this drug is effective and quotes textbooks which describes this as the most potent and effective long term treatment or prophylaxis for angina pectoris. I can't marshal strong evidence at the moment to tell him he is wrong and