

2. To evaluate clinical data on drugs proposed for use in the hospital, outpatient clinic, or domiciliary, and make recommendations for stocking of those considered most useful and effective.

3. To prevent unnecessary duplication of drug products.

4. To establish and provide for continuous revision of the station formulary.

5. To review, advise on, and recommend procedures pertaining to the prescribing, dispensing, and administering of drugs to assure patient safety.

6. To receive from the Chief of Staff all reports of adverse drug reactions and assist the Chief of Staff in the collection of pertinent data, evaluation of each reaction and preparation of reports to Central Office.

In addition to the local aspects of committee functions, the actions and recommendations of the committees serve as guides in the selection of drugs for most advantageous central procurement. An additional function of the committee, therefore, will be to make its recommendations known to the Executive Committee on Therapeutic Agents (Central Office) through the committee meeting minutes, and to include the medical reasons for unusual committee actions (such as the approval for use of a specific brand drug if the same drug is in the Veterans Administration system by nonproprietary name).

The Executive Committee on Therapeutic Agents in Central Office is chaired by the Assistant Chief Medical Director for Professional Services and the Director of Pharmacy Service serves as Recorder. The other members are directors of patient care services and our Research and Education Service. The Committee's principal functions are:

1. To develop, recommend and promulgate policy and information on rational use of drugs in the Agency.

2. To review and act on reports from Veterans Administration hospitals and clinics for use of drugs not available in interstate commerce and for which an FDA New Drug Application has not been effected (investigational drugs) for clinical treatment in specific cases.

3. To evaluate reports of Adverse Drug Reactions prior to forwarding to FDA. (Veterans Administration reports are combined with reports from all hospitals, Government and non-Government, sending such information to FDA and the resulting compilation prepared by FDA is furnished to all Veterans Administration hospitals and clinics.)

4. To review minutes and recommendations of each Therapeutic Agents and Pharmacy Reviews Committee submitted by Veterans Administration activities to identify drugs which will be considered for centralized procurement.

5. To review and act on Quality Improvement Reports submitted by Veterans Administration hospitals and clinics indicating a dissatisfaction with a drug product. Appropriate information is then coordinated with FDA and USP officials.

To assist each Therapeutic Committee in selection of the best drugs for patient therapy, a multitude of leading publications are available in each hospital and clinic including Journal American Medical Association, New England Journals of Medicine, Annals of Internal Medicine, etc., and publications such as Medical Letter, Clin-Alert. In addition, all of FDA releases on drugs such as Clinical Experience Abstracts, Adverse Reaction Reports, FDA Current Drug Information circulars, Dear Dr. letters, New Drug Approvals, Weekly Recall Reports, are provided for guidance.

VA professional publications such as, "Drug Treatment in Psychiatry," "Cooperative Studies in Psychiatry," "Pulmonary Diseases Abstracts," etc., also provide supplemental information.

Mr. GORDON. May I ask another question. What are you going to do about the drugs classified as "probably effective"? Would you buy a probably effective drug if there is a known effective drug that could be used as an alternative?

Dr. WELLS. We are looking forward to this list, this official publication, of the possibly effective drugs. At that point in time we will review these individually. We will publish the list to our field stations. We will get the advice from our field people and other experts as to exactly what we should do, drug by drug, what kind of alternatives are likely to be offered, and we will make the