

In part, due to the influences of such promotional efforts these drugs are being increasingly prescribed and such use is increasing rapidly. The American public is currently receiving over two billion prescriptions per year and it is estimated that within four to five years this may increase by 50 percent to three billion prescriptions per year. In no area is this increase more dramatically evident than in the case of psychotropic drugs where in 1969 over one billion doses of amphetamines and two and one-half billion doses of barbiturates were used. The magnitude of other psychoactive drug use is reflected by the fact that some five to six billion doses were distributed in 1969 representing a 65 percent increase in the use of these drugs over a four year period.

We have a rapidly growing, frequently troublesome, occasionally tragic, and to a large extent needless and avoidable problem on our hands in the misuse of drugs in America.

Since most physicians want to serve their patients well and do what is best for them it seems reasonable to assume that where poor therapeutics is being practiced it is at least in part due to poor communication to the physician of the information he needs to do a better job.

If the physician had balanced information, honestly pointing out the limitations and actions of a drug, its beneficial and adverse effects and when it should or should not be given, he would have the information necessary to make the most rational therapeutic decisions. Too often at present, this needed information is not readily available to him.