

cist of the usual daily dose of aspirin is as little as two cents; the cost to the pharmacist of the usual daily dose of Darvon Compound-65 is 29 cents.

Conclusion.—While some controlled studies have shown that propoxyphene in doses of 65 mg is a more effective analgesic than a placebo, other controlled trials have not. In patients who cannot take aspirin, acetaminophen is an acceptable and much less expensive alternative. (A list of commonly used mild analgesics, their usual dosages and their comparative costs appeared in The Medical Letter. Vol. 14, p. 32, April 28, 1972.)

USE OF DRUGS UNDER THE MISSISSIPPI MEDICAID PROGRAM

(By Alton B. Cobb, M.D., M.P.H., Donnie P. Wilson and John M. Abide)*

The Mississippi Medicaid Commission began payments on July 1, 1970, for legend drugs, insulin and a limited number of over-the-counter drug products when prescribed by a physician or dentist. Any legend drug prescribed by a physician or dentist, except those containing amphetamines or vitamins, was covered under reimbursement to over 700 participating pharmacies and 13 dispensing physicians. Among the legend drugs, 27 were covered only as generics. The purpose of this report is to review actual utilization patterns, costs, etc. of drugs under a relatively unrestricted program for a rather well defined population sub-group.

The Mississippi Medicaid Program has a contract with Mississippi Hospital & Medical Service (Blue Cross-Blue Shield) for claim payments, computer informational storage, retrieval, and reporting systems to satisfy Federal and State requirements. This includes program reports necessary for planning and administration of the Medicaid Program.

Near the end of the Program's first year of operation, a series of special program reports were prepared for program review, evaluation and planning of possible program changes. These reports covered the period from July 1, 1970, through February 19, 1971.

The first part of this paper summarizes information gathered from these special reports and includes: 1. Recipient usage of drugs by eligibility classification; 2. Frequency of individual drug usage by overall ranks; and 3. A breakdown of drug utilization by race and sex.

Individuals eligible for benefits under the program by public assistance categories, percent eligible by category, and payments for drugs during the period July 1, 1970, through February 19, 1971, are shown in Table I.

It is apparent from Table I that the aged and disabled represent the largest users of drugs. Each of these categories used almost twice the percentage of drugs as their proportionate share of the total eligible pool.

TABLE I.—NUMBER OF PERSONS ELIGIBLE FOR MEDICAID AND EXPENDITURES FOR DRUGS WITH PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION BY PROGRAM CATEGORY, JULY 1, 1970 TO FEB. 19, 1971

Program	Eligibles		Expenditures	
	Number	Percent	Amount	Percent
Total.....	199,050	100.0	\$4,477,162.43	100.0
Old age assistance.....	74,943	37.6	2,977,498.94	66.5
Aid to the blind.....	2,126	1.1	62,782.36	1.4
Aid to permanently and totally disabled.....	22,030	11.1	1,119,810.70	25.0
Aid to dependent children.....	99,951	50.2	317,070.43	7.1

All drugs used under the program are classified into 38 groups or therapeutic classes. In addition, all non-coded legend and all coded injectables represent a drug group. In Table II, the 10 most popular classes of drugs are shown for each category of eligibles.

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