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## LOOK WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT US!

During the late 1960s and early 1970s when the image of business, corporations, and the board room world reached its low point on the campuses of American universities, a corporate executive had occasion to visit one of the better-known colleges. He came back with a new realization of the stimulus for much of the restiveness and disdain exhibited by students toward the business community.

"You should hear what they are saying about us," he exclaimed in reference to the lectures being delivered on campus by various social activists. "And look at what they are writing about us!" he gasped, pointing to the handout materials distributed at these lectures.

Although he was a very educated and knowledgeable person, he had just learned a new lesson—one that we all need to be reminded of from time to time. In short, repeating his words: "Look at what they are writing (or saying) about us."

This anecdote came to mind recently as we were searching through copies of the journal *Drug Intelligence & Clinical Pharmacy* for the past year. We were hunting for an article we had earlier read on an entirely different subject, but in the process happened to stumble across three separate items, all on the subject of the responsiveness of the pharmaceutical industry in providing meaningful drug product information to pharmacists.

*Item*—The August 1977 issue included a communication from two University of Florida pharmacy staff members reporting on their efforts to obtain from drug companies the same information about those firms' products as they supply to physicians. Only one out of twenty firms contacted would agree to send pharmacists the same data that they routinely provide to physicians.

*Item*—The December 1977 issue contained an article entitled the "Pharmaceutical Industry's Obligation to Clinical Pharmacists," from a hospital center in Brooklyn, New York, which presents, in outline form, the areas of information that the pharmaceutical industry should provide to pharmacists regarding their drug products.

*Item*—The March 1978 issue carried a report by a community pharmacist from Chicago, Illinois, on his efforts to obtain drug product information from the pertinent manufacturers as part of his personal program to build a professional library of information in his pharmacy. The information he requested was for data on drug absorption, distribution, metabolism, elimination, clinical studies, toxicology, and pharmacokinetics. The responses he received were mixed at best, ranging from plaudits to "It's none of your business." Generally, the replies were sparse and disappointing.

For years, APhA has been urging pharmacists to seek objective data, to study it, and to make decisions, choices, and recommendations based upon facts and not puffery. More and more, pharmacists are trying to follow that advice, as reflected in the three reports cited above.

Many of our readers are either directly or indirectly connected with firms in the drug industry. They may assume that the industry as a whole, or at least the firm with which they are associated, is doing a good job of supplying such data. For purposes of this editorial, we shall not offer any opinion ourselves, but it is revealing to see the published conclusions of the authors of the three above-cited articles. The following excerpts are quoted from those articles in the same order as listed above:

- "If pharmacists are ever going to become patient-oriented drug experts, they should be provided with the necessary information to do so without encountering the lack of interest that is exemplified by the pharmaceutical industry."
- "The pharmaceutical industry must begin to recognize its responsibility to improve patient therapy by providing expanded information to the physicians and pharmacists who monitor it."
- "A note to Industry: Pharmacists do not fill prescriptions *ut dict* anymore. We analyze, check interactions both synergistic and antagonistic, review with doctors and patients the medications, and communicate as professionals. Industry must stop making excuses for their poor contributions to the pharmacist."

The journal in which these articles and excerpts appeared—*Drug Intelligence & Clinical Pharmacy*—is primarily oriented toward pharmacy practitioners. As such, the majority of our readers probably do not review it on a regular basis and would not be aware what many pharmacists are telling each other. Consequently, the purpose of this editorial is simply to afford these readers with an opportunity to see "what they are writing about us" along the line of the anecdote above concerning the miffed corporate executive.