

### Prescription Methods Used by Doctors Criticized

Toronto (Science Service) — Doctors received a mental rap across the fingers from an editorial in the Canadian Medical Association Journal here.

The editorial criticized the widespread misuse of drugs and emphasized the illogic that prompts physicians to prescribe drugs for patients. The editorial appeared in the Feb. 27 issue of the journal.

#### Irrational Behavior

One doctor quoted in the editorial charged that physicians are now, more than ever before, in danger of irrational and irresponsible behavior as therapists. This comment was followed by a reference to the statement made in the United States that only about five per cent of the 400 tons of antibiotics used on the North American continent last year was used correctly. The rest was used in noninfectious conditions and for the alleged prevention of various conditions and represented a totally unjustified expenditure of money.

On the other hand, doctors probably did not turn often enough to the use of antibiotics to prevent rheumatic fever, the editorial quoted. It is based upon two talks delivered at a recent meeting of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

The editorial pointed up these reasons for this misuse:

1. There is and always will be an honest difference of opinion among physicians concerning correct therapy.

2. There is the age-old uncritical acceptance of ideas by physicians.

#### Patient Pressure

3. Some treatment is given to the patient to make the doctor feel more comfortable, especially in those cases where the doctor knows he can do nothing to help the patient.

4. Pressure from patients who, through the application of a meager amount of pseudo-scientific knowledge, tell the doctor what is best.

Unfortunately, the public faith in science is growing while that in the individual doctor is dwindling, the editorial commented. There is still a pathetic belief in the superiority of a committee of uninstructed persons over one man with special knowledge. Yet a positive step can be taken if as much publicity as possible is given to the dangers of over-prescription of antibiotics and tranquilizers as to the sensational and usually erroneous reports of medical "discoveries," it concluded.

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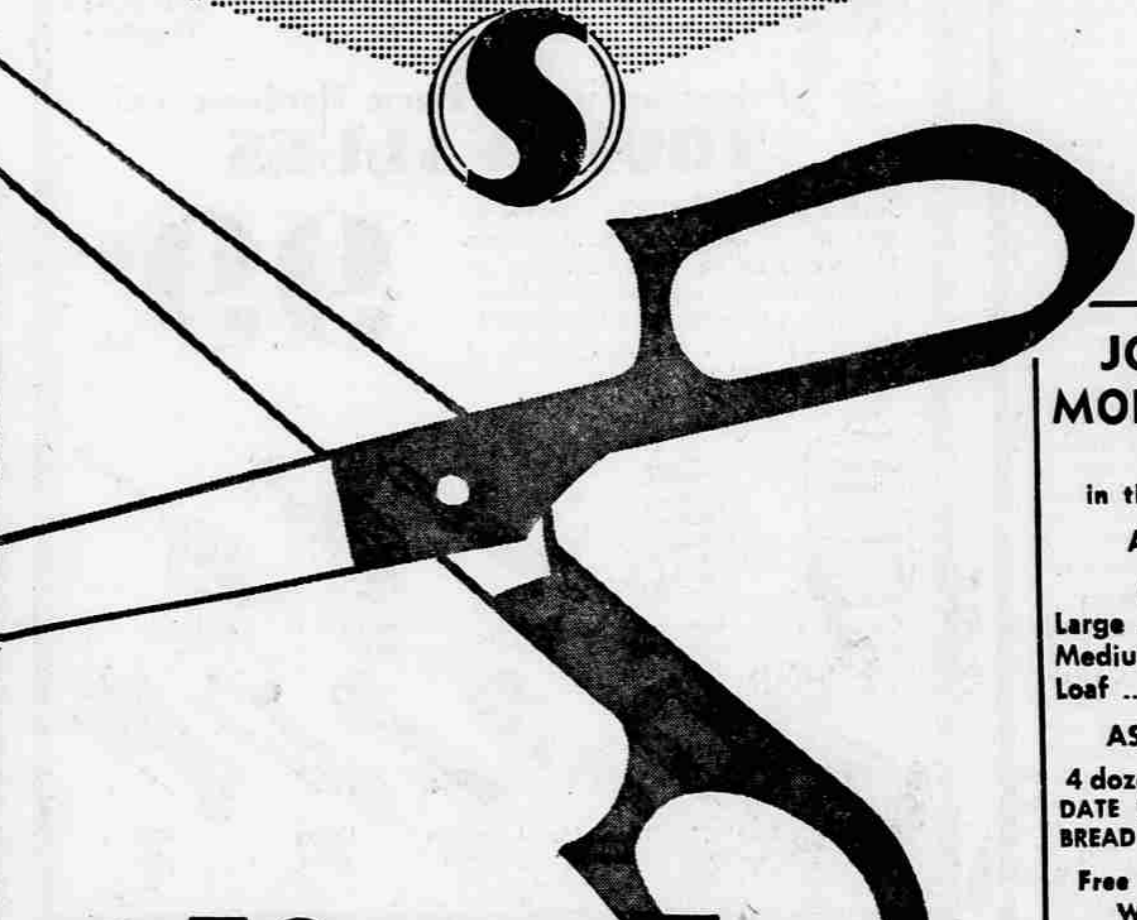


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