In observing the uneven quality of reporting on methods for allocation and blinding, as has occurred in publications of clinical trials, D.C. Bauer (8) an editor of a journal, mandated that the CONSORT guidelines for reporting clinical trials be used in his journal. The CONSORT guidelines (9) provide a reasonable list of parameters for including in publications relating to clinical trials.

Where side effects specifically associated with the study drug are known by the subjects or by clinical trial personnel, the presentation of these side effects can result in unintentional unblinding. Masking of these side effects can be undertaken, before the study, by using a placebo that causes the same type of side effects. As discussed in Chapter 7, an active placebo is a placebo with properties that mimic side effects such as dry mouth, or sweating, that might otherwise reveal that a subject is in the study drug group or placebo group (10,11). Another approach for preventing unblinding caused by known side effects of the study drug is shown by the following example. In a clinical trial on spironolactone, which produces the adverse drug reaction of feminization (of male subjects), the investigators maintained blinding by mandating that this, and other, adverse events by represented by letters of the alphabet (12).

Unintentional unblinding can also occur where the study drug requires continual dose adjustments during the course of the trial. Thus, physicians who are compelled to adjust the doses of some subjects, but not of other subjects, may be able to guess that the adjusted subjects are in the study drug arm, and that nonadjusted subjects are in the placebo arm. This type of unblinding can be prevented by requiring some of the placebo subjects to have adjustments of placebo (13,14,15).

II. LOGISTICS OF KEEPING TRACK OF STUDY SUBJECTS

An excerpt from a Clinical Study Protocol on an anticancer drug provides concrete guidance on how to keep track of study subjects. Proper accounting of each study subjects was ensured by way of a number that identifies the

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