

News in brief . . .

■ **German spending on pharmaceuticals for the 5 months to the end of May** this year reached DM14.814 billion* (\$US12.3 billion). This represents an overall 12.2% increase compared with the same period last year. May itself saw a 9.2% increase in drug expenditure in Germany, while March saw a 17% increase. The large rise in drug spending in March has been attributed partly to an influenza epidemic, although other factors include a transition to larger pharmaceutical packs and more expensive products.

* *Deutschmarks*

Five-month pharma spending in Germany. Scrip 2455: 7, 16 Jul 1999 800783494

■ **Extensive campaigns for immunisation against poliomyelitis are expected over the next few months**, as the World Health Organization (WHO) enters the last phase of its plan to eradicate the disease. With the deadline for eradication less than 18 months away, WHO will concentrate its efforts in countries where there is conflict or widespread polio transmission. WHO remains confident that polio eradication will be achieved, despite high infection rates in such countries as India, Pakistan and parts of Africa, and a recent outbreak in Angola.

WHO mounts final assault on polio. Scrip 2456: 16, 21 Jul 1999 800783477