

found to have a multiple chemical personality, but the anti-beriberi is number one of the B complex.

Vitamin B₁ is now called thiamin since it has been isolated, identified and synthesized. In fact, the old ABC nomenclature of vitamins is being abandoned as their chemical compositions are being discovered.

The first gram (1/30 ounce) of thiamin must have cost more in labor and money than any other biochemical substance, probably several hundred thousand dollars. While dozens of American, British and other biochemists worked on the problems, a great share of the credit for thiamin goes to Dr. Robert R. Williams, chemist of the Bell Telephone Laboratories and Columbia University.

When the A.T. and T. was investigated not long ago, some congressman was somewhat puzzled as to why a tele-

phone company chemist was working on a vitamin. Perhaps he will be happier at the news that thiamin may help some cases of deafness, which assuredly concerns the telephone company.

Thanks to Dr. Williams and international chemical cooperation for nearly two decades, thiamin can be bought in the form of little white tablets. It completely cures beriberi, which is not very common in this country. More important, thiamin deficiency has been charged with causing neuritis of various sorts and doctors prescribe it frequently.

Strangely enough this vitamin which is particularly effective in treating neuritis from alcoholic overindulgence (so much so that mandatory addition of it to all liquors has been seriously urged) is necessary for the production of alcohol by fermentation.

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better record with 94 per cent. cures for chronic cases.

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Difficulties Beset Campaign

GONORRHEA, number two of what were formerly the "hush-hush" plagues, is proving more stubborn against eradication efforts than its deadlier fellow-ill, syphilis. Dr. R. A. Vonderlehr, assistant surgeon general of the U. S. Public Health Service, speaking before the meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, told of some of the problems that beset the attack.

"The disinterested attitude of the medical profession mitigates against the development of control measures," he said. "Authorities in charge of clinics and dispensaries too often consider diagnostic and treatment methods for gonococcal infections as being of little importance.

"The public, while willing to talk about it, has not quite made up its mind to do something about gonorrhoea, and infected people are inclined to consider the disease lightly. The public still tolerates the prostitute, either professional or clandestine, and public opinion permits the charlatan and the drug clerk to take advantage of infected individuals and ply their nefarious trade."

There has, however, been a considerable amount of progress, despite all obstacles. The various health services are obtaining better and more complete records of cases, and the number of treatments per patient has been steadily increasing. The number of clinics in which venereal disease treatments are given has more than doubled, although even yet not all of them give treatments for gonorrhoea.

One problem still unsolved is the effect of some of the newer chemotherapeutic treatments. There is evidence that in many cases these result in the more or less complete suppression of symptoms but leave the former patient still a carrier. Better means for detecting slight infections and symptomless carriers must be developed.

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MEDICINE

Sulfanilamide May Be Menace if Self-Administered

Improper Dosage May Bring Ill Effects and Improvement May Be Mistaken for Cure, Making Patient a Menace

SULFANILAMIDE becomes a menace instead of a modern medical miracle when bought over drug store counters and used without the supervision of an experienced, reputable physician, warned medical scientists at the meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

The danger becomes especially acute when self-treatment for gonorrhoea is attempted, and it is to sufferers from this "hush-hush" disease that most of the over-the-counter sales of sulfanilamide are made.

Ill Effects

Unsupervised self-dosage often brings on headache, dizziness, a drunk feeling, nausea, and more severe ill effects such as anemia and an allergy-like sensitization to the drug itself. Worse still, the drug may work a quick apparent cure, clearing up the symptoms and relieving the discomfort due to the malady, but leaving some germs still lurking in the victim's body. Lulled by a false sense of security, he may consider himself cured, and still remain a "carrier" and thus a menace to his family and the community.

Some of these difficulties are present

even in well-organized clinics, it was pointed out by Dr. Rogers Deakin of the Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis.

Among the very poor, malnutrition renders the disagreeable side-effects of sulfanilamide more pronounced, and when the patient is ignorant as well as poor he is very apt to discontinue his visits as soon as the immediate symptoms have been relieved and not persevere in the treatments until he is really cured.

Also warning against sulfanilamide's over-the-counter sale was Dr. W. A. Brumfield, Jr., of New York State's Health Department, who urged regulations to make gonorrhoea a reportable disease in every state and to prevent quacks from using sulfanilamide.

Brilliant Success

Sulfanilamide's brilliant success in curing gonorrhoea was shown by the report of Dr. Ruth B. Thomas of Dover-Foxcroft, Maine, indicating 75 per cent. cures for mild cases, 67 per cent. cures for acute cases and 65 per cent. for chronic cases. Sulfapyridine had an even

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Dr. Vern O. Knudsen, Professor of Physics and Dean of Graduate Study at the University of California at Los Angeles, will be the guest scientist on "Adventures in Science" with Watson Davis, director of Science Service, over the coast to coast network of the Columbia Broadcasting System, Monday, July 10, 5:45 EDST, 4:45 EST, 3:45 CST, 2:45 MST, 1:45 PST. Listen in on your local station. Listen in each Monday.