

MEDICINE

Sulfa Drug Control of Colds Hinted in Report of Tests

Treatment With Sulfadiazine Causes Improvement in Most of Group of Children in One Type of Infection

HOPE that with the aid of the sulfa drugs we might get through next winter and succeeding winters with fewer bad colds, attacks of bronchitis and pneumonia, appears in a report by Dr. Morris Siegel, of New York (*Journal, American Medical Association, July 4*).

Sulfadiazine, given on the very first day a sore throat or other symptoms of a cold appear, can apparently speed recovery and prevent the cold from developing into pneumonia or into an attack of bronchitis severe enough to keep the patient in bed or maybe send him to the hospital.

Dr. Siegel gave this treatment, during an epidemic last winter, to a group of feeble-minded children who were particularly susceptible to colds and other infections of nose, throat and lungs. As controls, one-half of the children in each of the same two cottages at Letchworth Village were not given the sulfadiazine treatment the first day they showed symptoms, although all of them were given such ordinary care as their symptoms required.

"Most of the patients receiving sulfadiazine improved after 24 hours," Dr. Siegel reports. "A few had a secondary rise in temperature within 72 hours after premature withdrawal of the drug and some showed no evidence of improvement.

"For the first 12 hours after treatment was begun there was often no perceptible difference between the treated and control cases. Within 24 to 36 hours, however, there were usually signs of improvement in the treated group. The temperature fell and remained low. The patient appeared less toxic. His appetite returned and he was no longer restless and apathetic but brighter and more cheerful. Signs of infection, such as coryza (running nose) and cough, still persisted in many cases but the infection appeared to be subsiding, as if the inflammation had abruptly passed the acute stage."

During a second epidemic of a milder kind of infection, the sulfadiazine treat-

ment did not seem to have much effect. This, Dr. Siegel believes, is probably because the second kind of infection was caused by a virus, which was not susceptible to the action of sulfadiazine.

This suggests that effective control of colds, bronchitis and the like by sulfa drug treatment would depend on whether or not they were caused by germs of the kind that can be overcome by the drugs. Since germs of this kind are believed to be the cause of many of the worst symptoms of colds and the

reason for colds lasting so long and so frequently ending in pneumonia, the chances seem bright for the sting of the common cold being drawn by the sulfa drugs.

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PSYCHOLOGY

Muscle of Ear Acts To Protect Against Noise

MEN subjected to the din of mechanized warfare or the crashes and shrieks of war production may have their ears protected by nature with "built-in" ear defenders.

A muscle of the ear, the stapedius muscle, which acts to rock that bone in the ear that looks like a horse's stirrup, serves as a damping agent to protect the inner ear against excessive noise. This was learned in animal experiments conducted by Drs. Ernest Glen Wever and Charles W. Bray, at Princeton Univer-



LIGHTNING DID THIS

The holes in this ball were made by lightning during the seven years that the ball rested on top of an 878-foot antenna tower in Nashville, Tenn. From the size of the hole, the amount of electricity contained in the stroke can be calculated. It is surprisingly small. The stroke that produced the biggest hole, nearly an inch in diameter, contained only enough electricity to light a 40-watt lamp about 80 seconds. The holes are being examined by Dr. Karl B. McEachron, left, and J. H. Hagenguth of the General Electric High Voltage Laboratory, who devised the calculations.