MEDICINE

Chemical War on Allergy

Ethylene disulphonate injected into hayfever, asthma, migraine and other allergic sufferers relieved most or all of the symptoms.

➤ GOOD results with a chemical attack on hayfever, asthma, migraine and other allergic conditions were reported by Dr. W. Merritt Ketcham, of Kansas City, Mo., at the meeting in Cincinnati of the Southern Medical Association.

After one to six injections of the chemical, ethylene disulphonate, patients were relieved of most or all of their symptoms and have remained well for the six to 18 months since the treatment was given.

The idea for this chemical attack on hayfever and kindred ailments was developed by a group of British and Belgian scientists. They believed from their studies that the primary cause of allergy was a "department from normal in the chemistry of cellular metabolism involving the absence of certain catalysts of co-enzyme activity."

Shock, either emotional or as a result of infection or injury, would cause the abnormality in cell chemistry in persons whose body cells had inherited a tendency to react in such a way to the shock.

Giving the allergic patient a catalyst chemical which would restore the "normal oxidation chain involved in the production and normal distribution of cell energy" would be the suitable treatment, the scientists reasoned. They suggested that the missing catalyst would be a short carbon chain compound having two or more unsaturated carbon linkages. A number of such chemicals were produced, of which the most satisfactory seems to be ethylene disulphonate. It is not believed that this is the catalyst missing from the body in allergy but it helps the patients as if it were.

Dr. Ketcham has used it in some 200 cases during the past three years. One woman suffered from migraine for 18 years. During the past 18 months she was in bed two and three days of each week, losing five and six pounds during the 48 to 72 hours of headache. After six injections of diethylene sulphonate between April and October, she has been free of headache for a year except for one soon after the last injection, has gained 17 pounds and feels better than in years past.

Patients with year-round hayfever seldom get 100% relief, but most of them report 50 to 75% improvement. Dr. Ketcham believes, from results with those first treated, that in another year or two the improvement in these patients will be more marked.

Those with food allergy are able to eat almost anything without trouble and all are in better health. Asthma patients are relieved of their symptoms, gain weight and are able to get over a cold or sinus infection without having an attack of asthma.

Some patients may in future have relapses and it is always possible, Dr. Ketcham pointed out, that conditions which started the allergy may occur again and reestablish an allergic state.

Besides his own experience with ethylene disulphonate, Dr. Ketcham referred to reports of other physicians who have treated many hundreds of patients with the same satisfactory results.

Ethylene disulphonate is made by the Spicer-Gerhart Company in Pasadena, Calif., but is available only to physicians for clinical research.

Science News Letter, November 17, 1945

PHYSICS

Smyth Report Reprinted By British Publisher

➤ THE SMYTH report on atomic energy, which is the authorized detailed story of the development that led to the atomic bomb, has been reprinted in a 10,000-edition by His Majesty's Stationery Office, the official British government agency corresponding to the U. S. Government Printing Office which prints U. S. official publications.

About ten such U. S. documents have been reprinted similarly, including the official radar report. The American Library in London, which is a function of the Department of State, acts as professional adviser to the HMSO in this connection.

Science News Letter, November 17, 1945

GOES MAN ONE BETTER—The frogfish is never without his rod and worm-like "bait." The lure is a perfect imitation of a wriggling grayish-white worm, points out Dr. William Beebe of the New York Zoological Park. When the prey is about two inches away, the great mouth of the angler opens, creating an irresistible current. Having swallowed his prey, he lays the lure back on his head, ready for use when he is hungry again, and spreads all his fins, Dr. E. W. Gudger of the American Museum of Natural History reports.