

DERMATOLOGY

Skin Disorders Helped

► **HYPNOSIS INTELLIGENTLY** used on intelligent subjects is effective in skin disorders, Dr. Michael J. Scott of the University of Washington, Seattle, told the American Academy of Dermatology and Syphilology meeting in Chicago.

This is true not only in emotionally caused but in organically based skin diseases and some allergies, Dr. Scott said. Eczema, psoriasis, hives, warts and shingles were among the disorders he included.

But he emphasized that overenthusiastic extremists claim magical results blown up out of all proportion to reality, while opponents of hypnotherapy stress rare complications and harmful side effects.

"Such widely publicized views of a minute minority of hypnotherapists," he said, "are performing a disservice not only to the scientific researcher but to the public as well and retard the proper utilization of this valuable adjunct to medical therapy."

Dr. Scott said if hypnosis is properly

used in wisely selected skin patients, it is one of the safest methods of treatment available. He warned that physicians using hypnosis should have a basic knowledge of psychology. Without this, he said, it is a flimsy and potentially dangerous tool.

During hypnotic trance a physician can replace an undesirable habit with a constructive one.

"A person who lets an irritating wife or boss 'get under his skin' and cause him to itch and scratch," Dr. Scott pointed out, "can through hypnotic suggestion replace scratching by hitting a punching bag to release this harbored resentment."

Hypnosis may also enable a physician to discover subconscious conflicts that show themselves in skin disturbances. Repressed fear, hate, love, frustration, anger and so on can be consciously forgotten but subconsciously cause trouble, the speaker said.

• Science News Letter, 78:420 December 24, 1960

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Acne Treatment Found

► **AN EXPERIMENT** with a new drug successful in treating the teen-age scourge of acne was reported at the American Academy of Dermatology and Syphilology meeting in Chicago. The antibiotic is Declomycin, a trade name for a 7-Chloro-6-demethyltetracycline.

Dr. John H. Hicks of the University of Miami School of Medicine, Miami, Fla., reported that of 30 patients receiving the drug, 83% showed good to excellent response. His experiment was in the form of a "double-blind" study in which a placebo was given to 16, but neither the patient nor the physician knew what medication the patient was getting until the test was completed.

Twelve of the patients developed a sun-light allergy from Declomycin, but by

avoiding exposure to the sun, they were able to continue medication.

Another skin disease, psoriasis, was discussed by Dr. Rees B. Rees of the University of California's School of Medicine in San Francisco, who said it may be a delayed physiologic birthmark.

"An inborn predisposition," he said, "persists even after the scaly areas are brought completely or partially under control."

The drugs aminopterin and methotrexate slow down the cell reproduction when the outer layers of the skin race out of control, he said, but these drugs are subject to rigid Federal Food and Drug Administration control and must be given directly to the patient by the doctor.

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Chemical Bleaches Skin

► **CONTINUED GOOD RESULTS** from a chemical that can turn Negro patients white who have vitiligo, or piebald skin, were announced by Dr. Robert Stolar, a Georgetown University clinical associate in dermatology, Washington, D. C., told the American Medical Association in Washington, D. C. He introduced a Negro woman, who turned completely white after a three-year treatment.

The chemical is "a purified and finely milled monobenzyl ether of hydroquinone" made into an ointment by Drs. Aaron Bunsen Lerner and Thomas B. Fitzpatrick

of Portland, Ore., see SNL, 63:390, June 27, 1953.

In 1953 the chemical was used mainly for liver spots, severe freckles, the darkened skin of Addison's disease and berlock, or berlock dermatitis, a discoloration of the skin that sometimes follows the use of perfumes or toilet articles that contain ethereal oil.

The doctors said two Negro patients had used the ointment on a single arm for long periods of time and that they became entirely depigmented except for the hair and eyes, which kept their normal coloring.

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Friendly Cats May Carry Cat Scratch Disease

► **CATS MAY** innocently infect their owners with cat scratch disease without ever baring their claws.

The cause of this skin disease may be a filtrable virus, Dr. Ray O. Noojin of the University of Alabama medical center, Birmingham, told the American Academy of Dermatology and Syphilology in Chicago.

Dr. Noojin said many persons break out with the disease after merely coming into contact with a cat without actually being scratched. The disease tends to develop in two weeks after the patient has noted a cat scratch or at least been in contact with a cat.

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SCIENCE NEWS LETTER

VOL. 78 DECEMBER 24, 1960 NO. 26

Edited by WATSON DAVIS

The Weekly Summary of Current Science, published every Saturday by SCIENCE SERVICE, Inc., 1719 N St., N.W., Washington 6, D. C., NORih 7-2255. Cable Address: SCIENSERVC.

Subscription rates: 1 yr., \$5.50; 2 yrs., \$10.00; 3 yrs., \$14.50; ten or more copies in one package to one address, 7½ cents per copy per week; single copy, 15 cents, more than six months old, 25 cents. No charge for foreign postage.

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Printed in U.S.A. Second class postage paid at Washington, D. C. Established in mimeograph form March 13, 1922. Title registered as trademark, U. S. and Canadian Patent Offices. Indexed in Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, Abridged Guide, and the Engineering Index. Member Audit Bureau of Circulation.

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