

PHARMACY

Penicillin in Production

Making of chemical from mold, which outdoes the sulfa drugs in curing many infections, is being pushed to the utmost for military use.

► PRODUCTION of penicillin, chemical from mold, which outdoes the sulfa drugs in curing many kinds of wound infections and germ diseases, is now being pushed to the utmost to make it available for our armed forces, Dr. A. N. Richards, chairman of the Committee on Medical Research of the Office of Scientific Research and Development, reports (*Journal, American Medical Association*, May 22).

Use of penicillin was started six weeks ago to treat soldiers returned from the Pacific area with unhealed compound fractures, osteomyelitis and wounds with longstanding infection. Results of this treatment started at Bushnell General Hospital, Brigham City, Utah, have been so encouraging, Dr. Richards reports, that plans are now being made to continue studies of its value in treating both wounds and venereal disease in 16 Army hospitals. The Navy plans similar though less extensive clinical trials of penicillin.

Production of penicillin, in spite of intense efforts to meet military medical needs, has in no instance gone beyond the pilot plant stage, Dr. Richards reports. In most plants it is still in the laboratory stage. Some 16 drug manufacturing companies are now engaged in its production or intend to be soon.

The supply of penicillin for civilian needs in the near future will be very limited, he states, unless production expands at a greater rate than can now be foreseen.

Chief handicap to large scale production lies in the fact that the mold produces only very limited amounts of the germ-fighting chemical. An exceptionally high yield would be in the order of about one-thirtieth of an ounce by weight from about 20 quarts of culture medium on which the mold that produces penicillin is grown. And it takes days of mold growth for production of this minute amount.

Discovered by Dr. A. Fleming of St. Mary's Hospital, London, England, in 1929, the curative possibilities of penicillin were first revealed to the medical world in 1940 and 1941 by Prof. H. W. Florey, Dr. E. Chain and collaborators

of Oxford University. Following a visit to this country by Prof. Florey, and with the encouragement of the Medical Research Committee and the National Research Council, Dr. Richards states, research looking toward the production of penicillin was started in the fall of 1941 by Merck and Company, E. R. Squibb and Sons, Charles A. Pfizer and Company, the Lederle Laboratories and perhaps others.

More than 300 patients have been or are being treated with penicillin and Dr. Richards states "there is good reason for the belief that it is far superior" to any of the sulfa drugs for staphylococcus aureus infections with and without blood poisoning, including acute and chronic osteomyelitis, cellulitis, carbuncles of the lip and face, pneumonia, empyema and infected wounds. Penicillin is also extremely effective in treating hemolytic streptococcus infections, pneumococcus pneumonia and gonorrhoea.

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PSYCHOLOGY

Psychological Association Defends Goodwin Watson

► DEFENSE of Dr. Goodwin Watson, psychologist and propaganda analyst of the Federal Communications Commission, against charges by the Kerr Committee and the Dies Committee that he is unfit for public office, was voiced in a unanimous resolution by the Eastern Psychological Association.

The Eastern Psychological Association is a professional society of psychologists located in the eastern area of the United States. The members, in the resolution, vouched for the "scientific integrity and professional competence of Goodwin B. Watson, and in the value of his present work as analyst for the Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service." They also "regard him as a loyal citizen of the United States and not subversive in either speech or conduct."

The psychologists expressed the opinion that Dr. Watson had been wrongly accused by the Dies Committee and received inadequate hearing before the Kerr Committee.

The present action against Dr. Watson, the scientists feel, "endangers the freedom of other scientists to make their contribution to public welfare as employees of Government bureaus."

They "deplore any political persecution of civil servants, and call upon representatives and senators to see that the American tradition of fair play is upheld, and that Dr. Watson be given a truly adequate hearing, or that the charges against him be dismissed."

Dr. Watson was born in Whitewater, Wis., and is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin with A.M. and Ph.D. degrees from Columbia University. He has been on the faculty of Columbia University as an educational psychologist since 1925. He has been with the FCC, on leave from Columbia, since before Pearl Harbor, Nov. 15, 1941. The professional societies of which Dr. Watson is a member include: American Psychological Association, American Association for Applied Psychology, Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, American Educational Research Association, American Sociological Society, American Political Science Association, American Orthopsychiatric Association and American Society for Public Administration.

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TESTING QUARTZ — This shipment of quartz crystals from Brazil is being inspected with the aid of an arc lamp in the Electronics Laboratory of General Electric. Thin slices of the quartz crystals will be used to keep radio stations on their assigned frequencies.