

MEDICINE

New Burn Shock Treatment

Having patients drink large quantities of sodium lactate solution proves successful, and does not require the use of blood plasma.

► SUCCESS with a new, simple method of saving victims of shock in severe burns without the use of blood plasma is reported by Dr. Charles L. Fox, Jr., of Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. (*Journal, American Medical Association*, Jan. 22)

The only death in 23 patients with extensive third degree burns and three others with second degree burns occurred in a patient who had carbon monoxide poisoning and lung edema when admitted to the hospital and who died four hours later.

The new treatment for the shock phase of severe burns consists in having the patient drink large quantities of sodium lactate solution. No plasma is given. The patient gets about seven to 10 quarts of the solution within the first 24 hours. The patients quickly become accustomed to the taste and drink it copiously of their own accord.

Vomiting, which frequently occurs in severe burns, is treated by giving more fluid. Often a small tube is passed through the nose and connected with a drip apparatus so that the sodium lactate can be given constantly to the patient.

Reports of the Pearl Harbor disaster and the Cocoanut Grove fire in Boston have "indicated," Dr. Fox states, that mortality from severe burns is relatively

high even when large amounts of blood plasma are used to fight shock. English experience has been the same. Studies by other scientists have shown that even large amounts of plasma do not always correct the concentration of blood following severe burns.

Salt (sodium chloride) and sugar solutions were formerly used to fight shock in severe burns, the solutions being injected into the veins. Results were disappointing. Recent experiments by Dr. Sanford M. Rosenthal, at the National Institute of Health, showed that sodium lactate solutions of somewhat different strength than the salt solutions formerly used, and given by mouth instead of into the veins, saved mice from severe burn shock. These experiments suggested that such solutions should be reconsidered.

The great military advantage of the sodium lactate treatment, if further studies confirm its success, is pointed out by Dr. Fox. Sodium lactate costs only a few cents. Since the patient drinks the solution, it is far easier and simpler to give and frees nurses and physicians for other duties than giving intravenous injections of plasma or serum.

Emergency use of this method when plasma is not available, he states, seems clearly indicated.

Science News Letter, January 29, 1944

MEDICINE

Foot-Bone Cancer Cured

Patient who was operated on 13 years ago now can walk miles and carry heavy loads without any discomfort. Cancer did not spread to chest.

► A 13-YEAR cure of cancer of a bone in the foot with multiple fractures of other metatarsal bones in the same foot is reported by Dr. Henry W. Meyerding, of the Mayo Clinic. (*Journal, American Medical Association*, Jan. 22)

The patient, a 15-year-old boy when first seen, is now a 190-pound man in

perfect health. He is able to walk miles without any trouble and to do a full day's work in a shingle mill where he carries heavy blocks of wood all during the working hours.

The trouble started, Dr. Meyerding believes, with a broken metatarsal bone resulting from an accident in which a

horse fell on the patient's right foot. The foot was crushed and held by a steel riding stirrup.

The foot swelled "like a watermelon" and for three weeks he was unable to walk on it. It did not feel right for two months after the injury. About two years later, while running, he felt something "give way" in the foot, and could hardly walk because of the severe pain. The physician he consulted took an X-ray picture and made a diagnosis of sarcoma (tumor) of the metatarsal bone.

When he came to the Mayo Clinic it was thought the condition was either in-

SCIENCE NEWS LETTER

Vol. 45 JANUARY 29, 1944 No. 5

The weekly Summary of Current Science, published every Saturday by SCIENCE SERVICE, Inc., 1719 N St., N. W., Washington 6, D. C. North 2255. Edited by WATSON DAVIS.

Subscriptions—\$5.00 a year; two years, \$8.00; 15 cents a copy. Back numbers more than six months old, if still available, 25 cents.

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Entered as second class matter at the post-office at Washington, D. C., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Established in mimeographed form March 18, 1922. Title registered as trademark, U. S. and Canadian Patent Offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, Abridged Guide, and in the Engineering Index.

The New York Museum of Science and Industry has elected SCIENCE NEWS LETTER as its official publication to be received by its members.

Member Audit Bureau of Circulation. Advertising Representatives: Howland and Howland, Inc., 393 7th Ave., N.Y.C., Pennsylvania 6-5566; and 360 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, STAt 4439.

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