

MEDICINE

Drug Stops Polio Pain

► USE of a drug instead of moist hot packs to relieve pain, muscle spasm and circulatory trouble in poliomyelitis is reported by Dr. Emil Smith and associates of the Kingston Avenue Hospital, Brooklyn, N. Y., in the *JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION* (Sept. 16) in Chicago, Ill.

The drug is known by the trade name of prisolone. Heretofore it has been used for disorders of circulation and high blood pressure.

Polio patients, the Brooklyn group reports, began to improve within 30 minutes after getting the drug by mouth and even faster when it was given by injections into the muscles. When the dose was big enough to produce a good effect, the "patients experienced a sense of well-being and sighed with relief," the doctors state.

"The pain either diminished or disappeared entirely. In most cases muscle tightness diminished and they were able to move the non-paralyzed parts more freely. They rested more comfortably during the day. Their appetite improved and they enjoyed their food. The majority stated that they were able to sleep comfortably for the first time since the illness began. Muscle twitchings present in some of the patients receded. Cold and clammy skins became warm, and excessive sweating disappeared."

The drug was given to 663 patients during the year 1949. It does not stop the spread of the polio virus through the central nervous system or alter its effects on nerve cells or prevent paralysis. It is not presented as a cure but as an aid in shortening the period of muscle spasm and pain so that rehabilitation treatment can be started as early as possible.

Unpleasant effects were nausea and vomiting, heart palpitation, chills, diarrhea and in five patients a feeling of things crawling

on their skin.

The Brooklyn doctors tried to avoid giving the drug to patients with encephalitic, bulbar and bulbospondial polio and to those in iron lungs.

Associated with Dr. Smith in this study were Drs. David J. Graubard, Joseph Falcone, Thurman B. Givan, Philip Rosenblatt and Mr. Avner Feldman.

Science News Letter, September 23, 1950

VETERINARY MEDICINE

Tender Steaks Now May Mean No Steaks in Future

► TO satisfy the appetites of sirloin steak buyers, U. S. ranchers may be progressively fattening their cows to the point where they cannot have calves, the American Veterinary Medical Association was told in Miami Beach, Fla.

Dr. G. T. Easley of Sulphur, Okla., warned that long years of selective breeding with an eye toward plumpness of beef cattle can produce cows apparently normal in every respect, yet unable to conceive and bear.

To produce tender steaks, ranchers in effect have been breeding cows with slowed-down thyroid glands. This condition, said Dr. Easley, obstructs normal functioning of the reproductive system. Excessive fat may hinder blood circulation, lower resistance to infection and impair the fertility of a cow.

Treatment with thyroid preparations and ordinary reducing diets may both show startling results in calving performance, he said.

Another cause for trouble in breeding was suggested to the annual veterinarians' conference earlier by Dr. A. H. Frank of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal Disease Center at Beltsville, Md.

More than half the cows in a group of 2,000 Maryland cattle have impaired breeding performance, he reported. A study of commercial dairy and beef herds showed 25% of the females, although free from recognizable infection, failed to conceive when bred. Another 25% failed to come into heat having once calved.

Neither mechanical stimulation of the reproductive organs nor treatment with pregnant mares' serum was effective, on the whole, Dr. Frank reported.

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