

MEDICINE

Chemicals Reduce Pressure

Methonium halide chemicals reduce high blood pressure and bring about improvement in eye symptoms. Two or three injections per day needed.

► **CHEMICALS** WHICH reduce high blood pressure and bring improvement in eye symptoms such as retinal hemorrhages, in headaches and dizziness, exercise capacity and heart disorders are reported in the journal, *SCIENCE* (July 6).

The chemicals are known by the general name of methonium halides. Scientists in England have been experimenting with them. The report of successful use of one of these chemicals, hexamethonium bromide, is from Dr. F. Horace Smirk of the University of Otago in New Zealand.

Two or three injections under the skin daily make it possible, Dr. Smirk finds, "without adverse symptoms, to secure a more substantial reduction of blood pressure than has ordinarily been practicable hitherto."

Patients develop tolerance to the chemicals from repeated doses, making it necessary to increase the dosage. The beginning dose of 15 milligrams sometimes has to be increased to as much as 200 milligrams.

Using an electrically driven syringe, Dr. Smirk has been able to give slow, continu-

ous injections of the drug over a 24-hour period. By refilling the syringe daily, this can be kept up for 10 days or longer. By this means, the blood pressure of severely sick patients, with pressures at 260/150, for example, has been kept at about normal levels of 130/90 day and night for 10 days or more.

In severe cases it has been possible by a methonium injection to reduce the blood pressure by as much as 140 systolic and 80 diastolic, "which reduction," Dr. Smirk points out, "is of the same order as the entire normal blood pressure (120 systolic, 75 diastolic)."

The effects of test doses have been studied in 170 patients. Treatment of one to 16 months duration has been in progress in 68 patients, including high blood pressure of the malignant, essential, renal (kidney) and postpregnancy toxemic types.

It is clear, Dr. Smirk concludes, that blood pressure reduction can be obtained in high blood pressure cases irrespective of cause and also in normal controls.

Science News Letter, July 14, 1951

of body chemistry conducive to development of deficiencies even when eating what is a nourishing diet for most people. As a result, according to this theory, various diseases including alcoholism may develop. To remedy the condition, according to the theory, the patient must get the particular vitamins his body needs.

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Spraying with a solution of common salt in water is effective in killing many of the weeds that grow among beets in the garden without injuring the beets themselves.

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MEDICINE

Alcoholics Can Now Drink

► **FOOD AND** vitamin pills will "cure" alcoholics "so they can drink occasionally without any excessive urge," Dr. Roger J. Williams, professor of chemistry and director of the Biochemical Institute at the University of Texas, claims in his new book, *NUTRITION AND ALCOHOLISM*.

Merely taking vitamins in addition to a good diet, however, is not the method Dr. Williams claims has cured alcoholics. The diet and vitamins must be specially prescribed for each patient.

This is because Dr. Williams believes some people are born with a disturbance

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