

MEDICINE

Swiss Anesthetic Used

► SURGEONS at the University of Michigan Medical Center in Ann Arbor are using a new general anesthetic that puts patients "out" in 15 seconds with a single intravenous injection, usually in the arm.

They report that the drug, called G-29, leaves patients free of unpleasant after-effects such as dizziness, nausea and depression. Recovery is prompt, and there is no "anesthetic hangover."

"The patients like it," said Dr. Gunter Corssen, assistant professor of anesthesiology at the University.

Dr. Corssen, in charge of the G-29 project, decided to use it at the University hospital after a visit last fall to the Swiss laboratories where it is made. M. J. Thuillier, a French chemist, developed the drug and first tested it on laboratory animals.

To date, it has been used for "a variety of short-lasting operations" on more than 300 patients. Physicians say it should not be used for major surgery of long duration, on persons with high blood pressure or certain glandular disturbances, or on addicts of alcohol, barbiturates and opiates.

A synthetic amide (an amide is an organic compound), G-29 is a milky, odorless oil. Two teaspoons of it will completely anesthetize a patient for eight minutes. The length of time the patient is "out" can be precisely controlled by varying the amount injected.

G-29 acts so fast that patients often do not realize they have been anesthetized until after the operation has been completed. They have been known to lose consciousness in the middle of a sentence, and complete what they started to say after they snap awake.

Recovery is quick because the chemical is rapidly broken down by the blood into water-soluble salt with no anesthetic property.

Dr. James B. Hayward, head of surgery at the center, said G-29 is particularly good for mouth operations, since it requires no obstructions such as masks to block the surgeon's field. Dr. Corssen said that in addition to oral surgery, G-29 is proving valuable for bone, eye, nose and throat operations.

The University is one of two places in the United States known to be using the new drug. The other is at Duke University, Durham, N. C.

A scientific exhibit on G-29 was on display at the annual American Medical Association meeting in New York.

• Science News Letter, 80:20 July 8, 1961

Emotional Ailments

► ASTHMA, bronchitis, emphysema and other pulmonary ailments as well as heart disability come to professional men who cannot cope with the stresses of middle age, the American Medical Association meeting was told in New York.

Of men between 45 and 55 in the execu-

utive and professional class who come to the doctor's office, 50% are involved in a pattern of emotional strain, Dr. John F. Briggs of the University of Minnesota, himself a calm 56, said.

"There is no intractable coronary disease," Dr. Briggs said, "only intractable people."

Men enter their fifties in a frenzied state not because they are passing through a male menopause comparable to the woman's climacteric, he believes. The frenzied fifties are a cumulative result of the emotional pattern of the "twirling twenties," the "thirsty thirties," and the "foolish forties."

There should be greater emphasis on teaching mental health in the schools before youngsters build up tensions, Dr. Briggs believes. He advised using a scheme weighing one's individual assets and liabilities early in life to avoid frustration later.

Status seekers would do better to accept their liabilities and adjust with their assets, he said.

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Cancer Treatment

► METHOTREXATE, the widely heralded drug reported successful for treatment of choriocarcinoma, a rare form of cancer associated with pregnancy, should not be used for treating related cancerous diseases, according to a group of surgeons at the Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn.

Dr. R. B. Wilson graphically demonstrated the difference in two other cancers from the placental cells (trophoblastic tissue) in an exhibit at the American Medical Association convention in New York.

"Surgery, or X-ray treatment, in cases where surgery cannot be performed, is preferable in treating chorio-adenoma destruens," Dr. Wilson told SCIENCE SERVICE. Although some physicians are experimenting with methotrexate and other drugs in treating this type of cancer, he believes chemotherapy is inadvisable and unnecessary.

Another type of tumor caused by placental cells, Dr. Wilson said, is the hydatidiform mole, a grapelike growth within the uterus that makes normal development of the fetus impossible. These grapelike growths should be removed.

Among the hundreds of other scientific and pharmaceutical exhibits shown at the meeting were those related to diabetes, to mental disease, to heart ailments, arthritis and numerous other illnesses that plague modern man.

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Itchy Skin Condition

► LIVING CONSTANTLY in air-conditioned places can cause a skin condition resembling the "winter itch" resulting from wearing red flannel underwear, the Ameri-

can Medical Association meeting was told in New York.

Dr. Marvin E. Chernosky of Houston, Texas, said he had treated 18 patients with this skin disease during the past three summers. The 18 literally "run from one air-conditioned place to another," and even their cars are air-conditioned.

The skin condition results because the skin dries out in air-conditioned places due to lower humidity. Although the increased comfort and beneficial effects of air conditioning outweigh adverse effects, Dr. Chernosky said its widespread use is causing a change in the seasonal incidence of diseases.

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