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# Long Use of Some Drugs May Cause Body Damage

➤ PROLONGED use of some of today's common medical drugs causes permanent body damage to rats and may be doing the same thing to humans, Dr. Curt P. Richter, John Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, Md., reported to the National Academy of Sciences meeting in New York.

The damage done by the drugs cannot be seen and the rat appears normal. However, daily records of the animal's running activity and food and water intake over long periods of time show the permanent damage.

The drugs tested included a sulfa drug, two anti-thyroid drugs, a barbiturate, a pain-relieving drug and female hormones. They were fed to the rats for from one to four months and created great and regular cycles of activity which have never been seen in a normal rat.

Each cycle was divided into a period of activity and one of almost complete inactivity. Food intake sometimes doubled in the inactive period.

The cycles indicate damage has most likely been done to the hypothalamus in the brain, and the rat never recovers from

Attention should be paid to the affects of many of today's new drugs after treatment with them has stopped, rather than just while it is going on, Dr. Richter told Science Service.

The studies showed that, at least in the rat, the drugs may be doing damage which does not show up at first, but which will be found long afterward.

Science News Letter, December 7, 1957

MEDICINE

# Report Clue To Leukemia

➤ SCIENTISTS at the University of California at Los Angeles have reported a new clue to leukemia, often called "cancer of the blood."

The clue turned up in experiments with mouse leukemia, which is similar to a type of human leukemia.

Purified nucleic acid, the genetic material of all living cells and viruses, from leukemic mice was injected into a strain of mice known to have a low incidence of spontaneous leukemia.

There was a significant increase in incidence of leukemia among the mice injected with the nucleic acid.

The scientists said the leukemia-causing properties of this nucleic acid may be within this substance itself or it may in some way activate leukemia-causing potentialities in the genetic mechanism of the host.

They emphasized these results were only preliminary and that much more research was necessary to learn their true meaning.

The experiments were performed by Drs. Esther Fincher Hays, Norman Simmons and William S. Beck of the UCLA Atomic Energy Project.

Science News Letter, December 7, 1957

A rattlesnake's head can move at speeds of 20 feet per second during a strike.

