

Greater Safety From New Anesthetic

Medicine

Brings Long Sleep Before and After Operation

AVERTIN, a new anesthetic developed in Germany which is just beginning to be used by American surgeons, was described to the American Medical Association in Detroit recently by Dr. Arthur M. Shipley of the University of Maryland School of Medicine.

This anesthetic is rapidly replacing ether in many types of operations. It is safe and has none of the objectionable features of ether. The drug is injected about half an hour before the operation and the patient falls quickly into a deep sleep. There is no fighting nor any feeling of apprehension. The patient comes to the operating room without having had any nervousness and consequently is in much better shape to stand the operation.

There is no nausea or restlessness afterwards, and the patient is spared much of the pain and discomfort immediately following the operation because he does not awaken until hours after it is over. This long, natural sleep gives the body a good start toward healing before consciousness returns fully and this hastens recovery. In some cases ether is given in addition to avertin, but only a small amount is needed.

If the patient has disease of kidneys, liver, rectum, advanced disease of the blood, pulmonary tuberculosis or colitis or is very old and feeble, avertin cannot be used. It has been very successful in brain and eye operations. Because it reduces the blood pressure somewhat, it is particularly good for operations on patients with high blood pressure which might otherwise be hazardous. The technical name for avertin is tribromethanol. It was developed by Dr. Richard Willstaetter of Munich and Dr. Duisberg of Jena.

Why Heart Disease?

MAN has developed his brain at the expense of his body, Dr. William J. Mayo of Rochester, Minn., suggested at the meeting. The poet's notion that the heart is related closely to the emotions has a basis in fact, Dr. Mayo said. This theory has been scoffed at by scientists who claimed that the heart is merely a blood pump and we must look to

Medical science moves apace, it is well shown in reports brought by the Science Service representative from the recent gathering of 10,000 physicians and surgeons in Detroit to attend sessions of the American Medical Association. At these meetings foremost research workers in medicine reported their progress and discoveries. Important developments which they discussed are described herewith and on page 27.

the mind and nervous system for the emotions.

When the mind gained control of the body and the sympathetic nervous system lost some of its power to regulate man's actions, man learned to control his emotions. This may have thrown an extra strain on the heart and accounts, perhaps, for its deterioration in civilized man. Heart disease is the leading cause of death today.

Ineffective Opium

OPIUM addiction does not lead to abnormal changes of the body. Even the intense craving and severe symptoms that occur when the addict is deprived of his drug can be controlled. These were the unexpected findings of a study of opium addiction reported by Dr. Arthur B. Light of Philadelphia. He studied 100 cases carefully and was unable to find any significant changes due to the action of the drug.

Hysteria is probably a frequent complication of the terrible withdrawal symptoms, he found. One of the men studied appeared to suffer intensely during the treatment for addiction and exhausted the patience of his physicians. A year later when he was arrested for shoplifting the police could not find any trace of withdrawal symptoms. The man knew that if the charge of drug addiction could be held against him he would face an additional sentence. Dr. Light explained. He therefore restrained the symptoms by an effort of will.

New Glandular Treatment

GLANDULAR substances are now used to treat eye diseases as the latest development in the application of this method. How the powerful secretion of a gland was used to treat progressive shortsightedness in

100 patients was told by Dr. Meyer Wiener, eye specialist of St. Louis.

From the suprarenal glands, small cap-shaped organs lying just above the kidneys, comes the potent epinephrine, or adrenalin as it is more commonly known. This substance has been extensively used as a stimulant.

Dr. Wiener treats his patients with properties beneficial to nearsighted eyes.

Nearsightedness, or myopia, is not a disease in itself, Dr. Wiener explained, but is a sign of congenital weakness. This weakness affects the elastic part of the coating of the eye, so that the eyeball stretches and the lens of the eye gets out of focus.

Dr. Wiener treats his patients with epinephrine and advises strenuous exercise in an effort to increase the secretion of this substance by the patient's own suprarenal glands. In 79 cases following this method the nearsightedness was checked. Dr. Wiener said that while one type of progressive myopia is benefitted by this method of treatment, another type shows some other influencing factor as yet undiscovered.

Glands Wrongly Blamed

GLANDS are relieved of a large part of the blame for making people fat. A new theory of the cause of obesity was given at the meeting of the Association for the Study of Internal Secretions by Dr. Hermann Bernhardt of the University of Berlin. During the last 20 years nearly every endocrine gland has been supposed to be guilty of causing extreme fatness in people, but Dr. Bernhardt does not blame the glands for this unfortunate condition.

"It is impossible to accuse a certain endocrine gland of being the cause of obesity," he said. Very often disturbances of the glands are a factor, but they are not the prime factor. The control of fat is chiefly a function of the regulative center of the central nervous system. This is in the inner brain close to the pituitary gland. Tumor of the brain, hardening of the arteries, or such changes in general behavior of the body as hunger and thirst can bring about a failure of the fat-regulating center.

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