

PUBLIC HEALTH

New Drug Addiction "Cure" Protested by N. Y. Physicians

Local Medical Society Says Sodium Rhodanate Treatment Was Issued Prematurely and Failed in Over 100 Cases

SODIUM rhodanate or thiocyanate, widely heralded as a new "cure" for narcotic drug addiction and alcoholism, has failed in more than 100 cases of drug addiction, the Tompkins County Medical Society at Ithaca, N. Y., has reported to the American Medical Association. The report is contained in a formal protest against what the society considers premature publication of the new method of treatment, and is signed by Drs. H. B. Sutton, N. S. Moore and B. F. Hauenstein, members of the special narcotic committee of the medical society.

The use of sodium rhodanate in the treatment of drug addiction was first suggested by Prof. Wilder D. Bancroft of Cornell University and his associates in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences in December, 1931. In this report successful use of the method on dogs was described. The theory of sodium rhodanate treatment is that in morphine addiction the colloidal state of the protein substances of the brain becomes too thick and sodium rhodanate thins it. The first report of successful use of this drug in treating a human case of morphine addiction was made by Prof. Bancroft in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences for January, 1932. Successful use of the method in six more cases was reported at the meeting of the National Academy in April.

The Tompkins County Medical Society freely admits that the theory of the sodium rhodanate treatment of drug addiction is worthy of consideration and that the drug may have some merit. The society's criticism is based on the fact that success was claimed for the new treatment after using it on only one case and without adequate controls. In scientific medicine the value of new measures is tested by comparing their effects on one or more cases with the effects of either no treatment at all or of the standard methods of treatment.

Although the original experiment with a single case was a success, the person on whom it was tried had been "cured" six times before, the society found.

"Regarding this incident," the protest reads, "the Medical Society of Tompkins County, N. Y., feels that to herald to the world as a cure a substance that is apparently successful in one case is unscientific, even though this demonstrates the correctness of the hypothesis regarding its action."

Likewise the society feels that none of the men who investigated the action of the new method has had sufficient experience with drug addiction to be able to judge the value of the new treatment. Prof. Bancroft himself is not a physician.

"There are many physicians in touch with some of the details of the past experiments with the rhodanate who feel that far too much is claimed for this substance," the protest concluded.

Science News Letter, July 23, 1932

ANTHROPOLOGY

Anthropologists, Not Beauty Specialists, Sort Eyebrows

ANTHROPOLOGISTS have at last joined the "beauticians" in an interest in the shape of ladies' eyebrows—and the eyebrows of men and children, too, for that matter. A study made of

the subject by Prof. V. Suk and Dr. F. Rozprym of the Masaryk University at Brno, Czecho-Slovakia, and said to be the first ever made by anthropologists, has been reported in the British journal *Nature*.

The form of eyebrows varies greatly, the scientists found, but they can be classified into 11 types. First there is the "spreading" type which is quite common, perhaps accounting for the present vogue of eyebrow-plucking. Of the 470 cases measured, 157 were of this type.

Then there is the "even" type where the growth is even on each side. There were only 96 cases of this type, and it occurs 20 times as frequently in women as in men.

If your eyebrows are "peaked," you may be especially proud, for this type is very rare, occurring only 12 times all told.

Eyebrows which are thick near the nose and thin toward the outer edge are a feminine form. They are to be seen on the feminine face three times as often as on men. Eyebrows in a whorl from the nose outward are also feminine.

Those long curved eyelashes, which are so greatly admired, are unfortunately often lost by children as they approach maturity. Short, straight lashes are given impartially to men and women with equal frequency. Short, curved lashes are most rare, occurring very seldom on women, never on children. Two apparently abnormal types of eyelashes were found, one bent inward toward the eye, and the other long and straight, but hooked at the end.

Science News Letter, July 23, 1932

CONVENIENCE COUPON

for New or Renewal Subscription to Science News Letter

Send this coupon to Washington while you are thinking of it.

Science News Letter,
21st and Constitution Avenue,
Washington, D. C.

Please { start
renew } my subscription to SCIENCE NEWS LETTER. I am enclosing
remittance as checked below:

- 2 years, \$7
 1 year, \$5

Name _____

Street Address _____

City and State _____

If this subscription is a renewal, check here