

MEDICINE

# New Dangers of Sulfanilamide; May Harm Expectant Mother

## Physicians Warned Against Indiscriminate Use; Surgery Gives New Scalp and Ear After Injury

**S**ULFANILAMIDE is no panacea, and it may even be dangerous to expectant mothers for whom it was first hailed as a life-saving weapon against childbed fever, members of the American College of Surgeons were told at their meeting in Chicago.

Sulfanilamide was discussed in three reports of experiences with this drug, which has caused nation-wide alarm because of the deaths that followed use of a special preparation wrongly called an elixir and intended for dosage by mouth. The reports, however, were not about this so-called elixir but about the drug itself.

Giving of sulfanilamide itself to expectant mothers is open to criticism from the standpoint of its toxic effect both on the mother and the unborn child, it appears from studies reported by members of the department of obstetrics and gynecology of the Chicago Lying-In Hospital. The studies were made on animals to determine whether sulfanilamide had a poisonous effect on either the pregnant animal or the unborn offspring.

More encouraging was the report of two members of the faculty of Rush Medical College, Chicago, who used the drug to treat streptococcus meningitis occurring as a complication of middle ear infection. Eleven cases of this usually fatal complication, ten with mastoiditis and one without, were treated with the drug in addition to mastoid operation in the mastoiditis cases. All the patients recovered and no serious reactions to the drug were observed.

### Not a Panacea

Sulfanilamide is not a panacea in acute gonorrhoea and its promiscuous use should be discouraged, according to a statement from the staff of the Chicago Lying-In Hospital. The statement summarized experience with the drug in treating patients and ended with the following seven-point warning:

1. Discourage the promiscuous and unwarranted use of the drug.
2. Encourage its use only in infections by organisms susceptible to its action,

that is, streptococci, gonococci and pneumococci in the genital tract.

3. Just because a patient has sepsis, don't use the drug. Individualize and make the diagnosis.

4. Try to make the dosage compatible with each individual requirement. This applies to patients with kidney involvement.

5. Determine quantitatively the concentration of the drug in the blood and keep it below 15 milligrams per cent.

6. Watch the hemoglobin, the white blood cell count and the daily excretion of the drug so that there is no cumulative action. So far as symptoms are concerned, beware of cyanosis (blueness of the skin), bouts of fever and mental symptoms.

7. Avoid saline cathartics, administration of sulfates and most drugs containing minerals because of their harmful cross actions.

### Gets New Scalp

The case of a young matron who, after being scalped and losing her right ear, was given a new scalp and ear made from skin off her back and a piece of cartilage from her rib, was reported by Dr. James A. Cahill of Washington, D. C.

The modern surgeon, Dr. Cahill pointed out, needs to know how to treat cases of scalping, even though Indians armed with tomahawks no longer rove the plains and skulk in the woods. Scalping is fortunately rare today, but 96 cases of complete scalping in industrial accidents have been reported.

In the case Dr. Cahill reported, the young woman was scalped because her hair caught in the flywheel of a power machine when she stooped to pick up something that had fallen beneath it. More than eight operations, spread over 19 months, were necessary to give the young woman her new scalp and ear. The results are entirely satisfactory to her now and the slight deformity remaining scarcely shows after her headdress is in place. *(Turn to Next Page)*

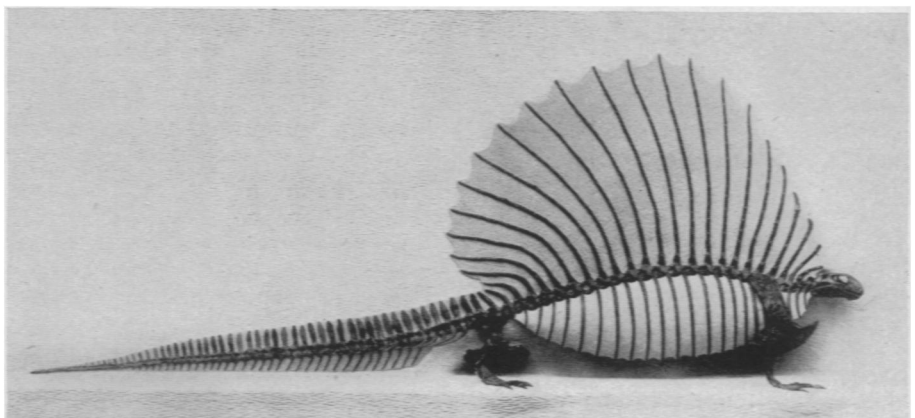
PALAEONTOLOGY

## Ancestor of Dinosaurs Exhibited at Harvard

**O**NE of the world's oldest and oddest animals, the ship-lizard, is now on display in Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology. It lived in Texas some 225,000,000 years ago and its fossil remains were discovered and collected from the famous Texas red-beds by Prof. Alfred S. Romer, L. I. Price and R. V. Witter.

This ancient lizard, forerunner of the giant dinosaurs, gets its name from a sail-fin, two feet long, that runs along its backbone. It is about eight feet long, half tail and half body, and its head is only half a foot long. Scientists call it *Edaphosaurus*.

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**FINE FOSSIL**

*This exceptional specimen of Edaphosaurus, a "ship-lizard," was collected and mounted by Harvard scientists. This 8-foot creature was a forerunner of the giant dinosaurs and lived in Texas some 225,000,000 years ago.*