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MEDICINE

Harmones Tried in Leprosy

➤ **CORTISONE AND ACTH**, hormones useful in arthritis and many other conditions, may prove helpful in overcoming two complications of leprosy, or Hansen's disease, Dr. John Lowe, specialist of the Nigeria Leprosy Service, reports to the *British Medical Journal* (Oct. 4).

The two complications are: 1. sulfone sensitivity with drug fever, and skin and liver inflammation; 2. acute and subacute leprosy eye inflammation in which the local use of cortisone appears to be effective and safe.

Apart from these conditions, the use of hormone treatment of leprosy is usually not good because of the danger of aggravating the underlying condition and even the symptoms it is given to relieve.

"The early results are good and the late results too often bad," Dr. Lowe states, pointing out that this is similar to the situation in tuberculosis.

Sulfone sensitivity, one of the two complications he finds helped by cortisone or

ACTH, is "the one real danger associated with sulfone treatment." For this reason, the good results with cortisone are considered "of great practical value."

Sulfone chemicals are now being widely used in treatment of leprosy, and with good results. But some patients become allergic to the chemical after a few weeks, just as some become allergic to sulfa drugs. In Nigeria, about two percent of leprosy patients become sensitive, or allergic, to sulfones. The patient becomes seriously ill and may die, particularly if treatment is being carried out by "inexperienced medical staff." Even with good treatment, it has heretofore taken several weeks for the patient to recover. But with cortisone or ACTH treatment, patients recovered within a week.

If the hormone treatment can be started within 24 to 48 hours of the start of drug sensitivity, Dr. Lowe thinks this complication could be made harmless.

Science News Letter, October 18, 1952

PUBLIC HEALTH

Good Care for Hands

➤ **WITH THE** autumn season well under way, most women turn their thoughts to getting their skin and hair in condition after the week-ends of sun, wind and, perhaps, salt water.

Men should also be giving some thought and time to the condition of their skin. Hands that labor need care to keep them fit, and that care includes care of the skin.

Clean hands that have been washed frequently during the day are signs of a smart man or woman—one too smart to be laid up with painful, disabling skin trouble or an infection from germs carried to mouth or nose or eyes from dirty hands.

Remember that the skin is part of the body's armor against disease. Cut, cracked, roughened skin may open the door to dangerous germs. The irritation that can come from grease, oil, cutting oils and other industrial chemicals is not only bad itself but may lead to infection of the skin as well.

The best preventive for skin inflammation is cleanliness, industrial physicians say. And doctors agree that cleanliness is a fundamental for a healthy skin and essential for an attractive one.

A shower morning and evening is not enough to insure the kind of personal cleanliness that workers in some industries need for protecting their skin. Frequent washing of the hands, arms and face and neck, if they get grease and oils on them, is needed. This removes the irritating substances from the skin often enough to keep them from having time to cause irritation.

Clean work clothes every day are important for the same reason. Another trick

that helps prevent skin trouble from cutting oils is to keep the machine a man works on clean, so he won't get too much oil on his hands in the first place.

Gasoline and other solvents, and harsh alkaline and abrasive soaps should not be used to get the oil and grease off, because they may be irritating to the skin, especially the thin, dry skin of older workers.

Plenty of mild soap and water used often is preferred by industrial skin specialists. In many plants soap suitable for cleaning without harming skin is furnished.

Science News Letter, October 18, 1952

Muscles account for nearly half of man's body weight.

High-powered chemicals that rid fields of insects, fungus and weeds sometimes upset nature's balance, allowing *mites* to multiply.



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