

The Choice of Hydnocarpus Preparation.

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AS the position of potassium iodide has been discussed fully in previous numbers of LEPROSY NOTES (now LEPROSY REVIEW), I propose, in this article, to confine my attention to the derivatives of hydnocarpus oil. From time to time the question is raised by workers as to the preparation of choice among its various derivatives. It can be said at the outset that the one therapeutic fact which up to the present stands out is that there is one remedy in leprosy which so far has stood the test of time, and that is hydnocarpus (chaulmoogra) oil. In the history of the treatment of this age-long scourge many remedies have been tried, but workers have come back time and time again to this ancient medicament. It is beyond dispute, therefore, that this remedy is the most efficacious of all drugs in the treatment of the disease. One can say, then, that it is of no real moment what remedy is used in the routine treatment of leprosy, provided some derivative of hydnocarpus oil is employed. If this, then, is the case, for workers who are desiring a drug which can be used as a routine, and who have no time to experiment in discovering the fine points of difference between the remedies, their choice will depend on three factors:—

- (1) The price of the drug.
- (2) The convenience of obtaining it.
- (3) The ease of administering it.

The cheapest of the remedies is undoubtedly pure hydnocarpus oil. The two chief drawbacks to its use are: (1) its viscosity, and, therefore, difficulty of injection; (2) its bulk, and, therefore, difficulty of export. In addition, before use it has to be mixed with double distilled creosote to the extent of 4 per cent. of creosote in the oil, and this additional preparation means the obtaining of a pure preparation of creosote. It can be obtained, of course, all ready for injection, but the oil bought in bulk straight from its source in India, and the oil obtained ready for injection differs considerably in price.

The ethyl esters of the oil are extremely efficacious in treatment, but the question of cost is an important one. In addition, the preparation is liable, in advanced skin cases, to cause sharper reaction. It is more economical for those in institutions near the source of supply of the oil to purchase the oil and prepare their own esters. This takes a little time,

and means a small amount of additional apparatus. Therefore, because of these drawbacks, the ester preparation is not recommended for routine work.

Undoubtedly the most convenient preparation for those outside India is "Alepol." This preparation is a fine powder, and a large amount of it can be exported in a minimum space. The cost of the product comes within the scope of every institution, and all that is required is to dissolve the necessary amount of alepol (3 per cent. or 4 per cent.) in distilled water, to which 0.05 per cent. carbolic has been added. To some who are in out-of-the-way places the use of distilled water is a serious objection, but it has been found that unless distilled water is used abscesses are liable to be caused.

Although this subject has been discussed more fully elsewhere,* the writer has been asked questions regarding this subject so frequently that he considers a few more points concerning it might be of help to the many workers who are treating the disease, not as specialists, but as general workers, who have many other problems besides this to deal with.

Tetrodotoxin.

To those who wish to test out drugs for the relief of painful neuritis in lepers, we have received the following information from Dr. Wilson, of Soonchun, Korea.

Tetrodotoxin is an extract prepared from the poisonous extract of the globe fish and is very effective in some of the neuritis cases in leprosy. It does not give relief in all of such cases, and we usually try adrenalin first, and if not effective then the tetrodotoxin. One or two doses usually gives relief quite like a good dose of morphine, though it is not an opiate not does it come under the anti-narcotic law. Every leper colony should keep this on hand and give it a trial. It is manufactured by a large drug manufacturing firm in Tokyo, Japan, called Sankyo and Co.

* "Leprosy, Symptoms, Diagnosis and Prevention" (2nd Edition), Dr. R. G. Cochrane.