

# TREATMENT OF TROPHIC ULCERS

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In common with others working among leprosy patients we have been perplexed over the trophic ulcers. We tried one treatment after another—everything we read of and others of our own efforts.

Finally on thinking of the meaning of the ulcer, we decided to attempt bringing nourishment to the parts. We began, accordingly, a series of experiments with ointments made up of animal fats. We summarise below what we finally settled on, beginning January 1937—

First remove carious bone and trim dead skin back to the level of the base of the ulcer; give a week of daily antiseptic dressings—perchloride, 1-1000, for a general cleaning up; then begin with an ointment of beef suet 2 parts; ghee 1 part; beeswax  $\frac{1}{4}$  part.

Beef suet alone is not readily absorbable; ghee alone soaks into the dressings; the two combined melt too quickly when the foot was in contact with the warm earth. Beeswax was

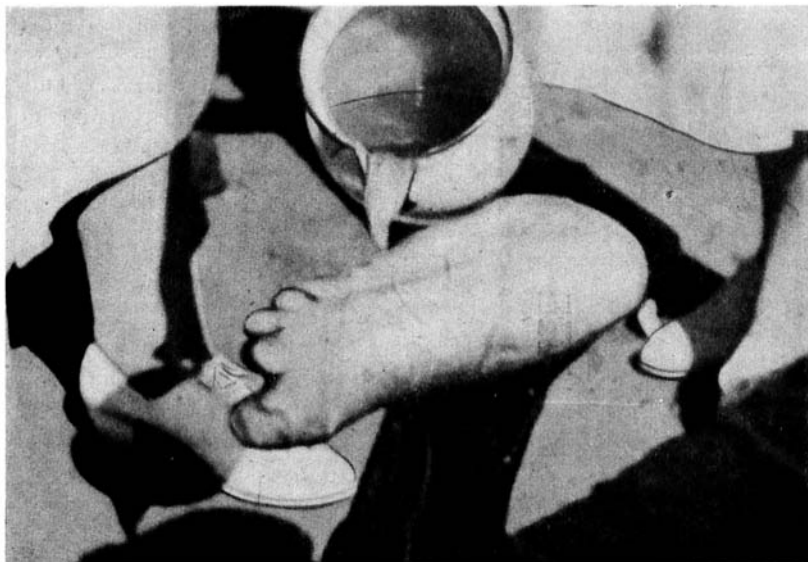


Fig. 1. Pouring on warm mixture.

selected for combining with the above named fats because of its high melting point.

A jug is partially filled with this ointment, which is heated in a water bath, and into the clean ulcer this warm mixture is poured. As the ointment congeals, a piece of thick, white material (drill or americana), large enough to cover it, is placed over the ulcer and a pad of cotton wool over this; it is well bandaged and the

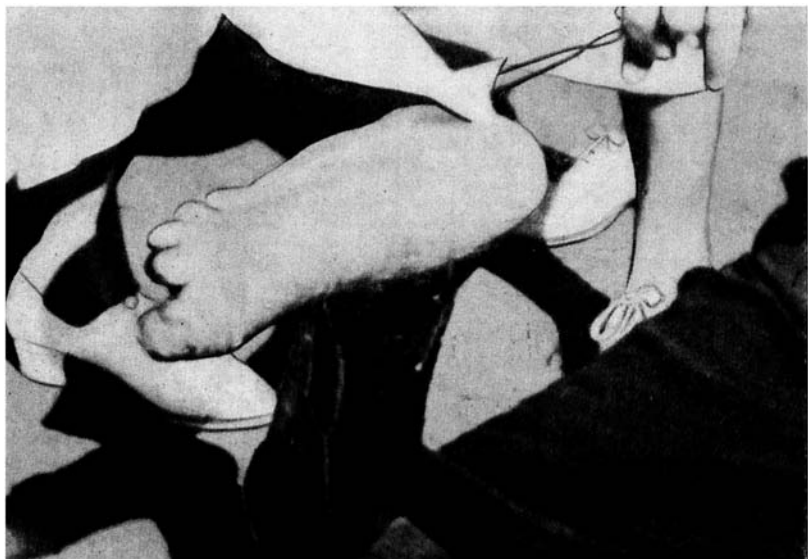


Fig. 2. Covering with cloth.

bandage sewed on. In the beginning of any case the bandage and ointment are left for three days then renewed as at first. After two weeks the dressing is changed but once a week. The bandage is protected from contamination by a stocking made of americana.

We began with sixty cases. In six months time fifty per cent. of these cases were entirely healed. Some small, shallow ulcers healed in six weeks time. As cases healed others joined the group, keeping the number to about fifty. In the oldest case we have at present the ulcer involved almost the entire sole of the foot. Treatment was begun eight months ago and the ulcer to-day is four inches long and one inch wide.

Others may have found a better treatment; we are finding this to be quite successful.