

## LACK OF EFFECT OF CORTISONE ON THE NEGATIVE LEPROMIN TEST

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In sarcoidosis, a disease which has certain resemblances to leprosy, the tuberculin test is negative in a majority of patients tested with 100 T.U. Yet two-thirds of such Mantoux-negative patients give a positive reaction to as little as 5 T.U. if the tuberculin is incorporated in an oily vehicle (James and Pepys, 1956).

Citron and Scadding (1957) mixed cortisone with tuberculin and found that although the tuberculin reaction was inhibited in hypersensitive subjects, a positive reaction was induced in 14 out of 28 patients with sarcoidosis who were tuberculin negative.

In both these experiments the production of a positive skin reaction was attributed to retention of the tuberculin, either by oil or by cortisone, at the site of injection. The conclusion was that in sarcoidosis there might be a residuum of sensitivity to tuberculin which could not be detected by ordinary tuberculin tests.

These experiments led us to consider if any latent sensitivity to lepromin in lepromatous leprosy would be revealed by the addition of cortisone to the lepromin, or whether the lack of sensitivity would prove to be absolute.

**Method.** Double strength lepromin was diluted with cortisone acetate suspension in such a way that 0.1 ml. of the mixture contained a normal test dose of lepromin plus 1.25 mg. of cortisone acetate. The mixture was used to test six lepromin negative patients with lepromatous leprosy, the injections being given intracutaneously in the usual way.

**Results.** The reactions were negative in all six patients, both at 48 hours and between 2 and 5 weeks.

### REFERENCES

- CITRON, K. M., and SCADDING, J. G. (1957). *Quart. J. Med.*, 26, 277.  
JAMES, D. G., and PEPYS, J. (1956). *Lancet*, 1, 602.