

Letters to the Editor

AN INEXPENSIVE SLIDE MARKER MADE FROM A DENTAL BUR AND A PLASTIC PEN

Sir,

At a recent meeting of the Ciba-Geigy Leprosy Fund in Basle, Switzerland, Professor S Pattyn (Antwerp, Belgium) drew attention to the existence of a slide marker which can be made from a metal dental bur and a (discarded) plastic pen (Figures 1 and 2). It was thought this had originated in Turkey and Professor Turkan Saylan (Istanbul) has now confirmed that it was indeed first devised by Professor Melih Tahsinoğlu of the Department of Pathology, University of Istanbul. It consists of an ordinary 'Bic' or similar plastic pen (used and discarded), into the tapered end of which can be inserted a round-tipped dental bur, about 15 mm long. The tip of the plastic pen has to be melted to insert and secure the bur and the procedure should be carried out in an extraction cabinet since the fumes are toxic. Discarded drills can easily be obtained from dentists and they mark glass clearly, even though unsatisfactory for drilling teeth. Markers of the kind illustrated have been in use for many years in the Dermatopathology Department of the Istanbul Medical Faculty and in the leprosy control programme, based at the hospital at Bakirköy. This simple device, using materials which would otherwise be thrown away, seems to be highly satisfactory, and it costs nothing. By contrast, the current list price of a diamond marker in the UK is £6.00 Sterling (approximately USA \$12.00).

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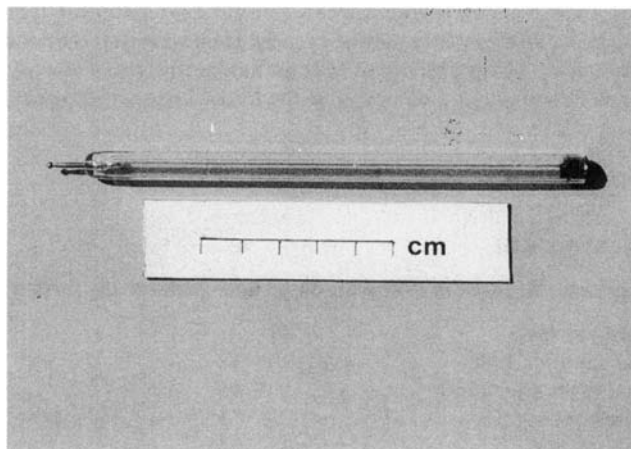
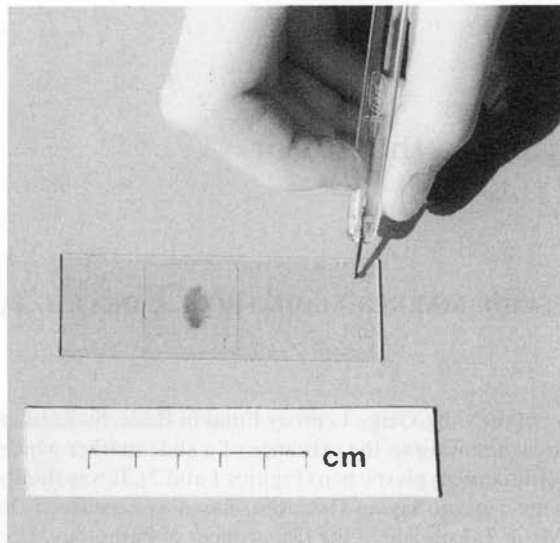


Figure 1

**Figure 2**