

ALLERGIC REACTIONS BEFORE AND AFTER SURGERY

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Allergy is the bane of surgery. Allergy is on the increase among the American public and allergy can give rise to many conditions. Samuel Hahnemann can be considered the father of allergy and its treatment. Osler admitted "no one individual has done more good to the medical profession than Hahnemann.

Dr. Henry Welch, U. S. Food and Drug Administration, told the antibiotics symposium last month that serious reactions to penicillin are increasing every year. One-third of the reactions were life threatening. The reactions are still small compared to the number of doses given. It can prevent the 200 to 400 deaths predicted yearly.

"Too much tranquilizer can cause convulsions," Drs. Essig and Carter reported in the August-September 1957 *Study of Experimental Biology and Medicine*, "especially after its use in epileptics and alcoholics."

The American public is taking by far too many drugs. Dr. David P. Barr states that a patient now has a one to twenty chance of getting into serious trouble because of one or more drugs that were given to him for either diagnosis or treatment. A complete check-up during a hospital stay usually requires 20 to 40 drugs, and allergy increases with the multiple use of drugs.

It is only due to improved surgical skill that the death rate is decreasing. The otolaryngologist has more problems with allergy than does a surgeon specializing in herniorrhaphy. Adriani and Campbell report 15 deaths due to tetracane for endoscopic procedures. It is serious when a topical application of a local anaesthetic to a mucous membrane causes a fatality. Bernstein and Klotz report allergies to tranquilizers of a histamine-like nature. Chlorpromazine (thorazine) produces nasal congestion, dermatitis, photo-sensitization, pruritis, influenza-like syndromes, agranulocytosis and jaundice.

Brody and Topin report apnea due to benadryl in which 100 mgms. were given at 9 a.m., another at 10:30. Artificial respiration restored the patient in 10 minutes. He was able to speak in 30 minutes and then slept for five hours. Cardiovascular collapse has been reported due to contrast media for pyelograms. They are occurring with frequency at all large hospitals.

Babione reports penicillin reaction rates in the Navy. Allergy has been reduced 59% in the last four years, due to the judicious use of penicillin. Only two deaths were reported in 1955.

The allergic patient is often operated too early after an allergic reaction. It is wise for a surgeon to postpone operation a few days in spite of the rising cost of hospital care. Improved methods in case-taking are necessary in studying the allergic patient. The surgeon must be more keenly interested in pre-operative and post-operative treatment than heretofore.

The post-operative reactions may be due to antiseptics such as physoderm and alcohol; morphine and demerol; intravenous fluids and transfusions; antibiotics and tranquilizers. Scotch tape has replaced adhesive tape dressings among the allergic. The five principles of allergy are the same as the five principles of Homœopathy and these have now been adopted by modern medicine. Remember single remedy, minimal dose, totality of symptoms, symptom similarity and careful case taking. The law of *Similia Similibus Curentur* "adhuc immota, haec lex in aeternum perstabit" ("Hitherto unmoved, this law will endure forever").

Modern medicine takes its toll.

—*Jourl. of the Am. Inst of Homœopathy, Mar-Apr, '58.*
