

# THE HAHNEMANNIAN GLEANINGS

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## B.C.G. VACCINATION—WHY I OPPOSE IT

SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

The more I examine this subject, the more firmly am I convinced that this B. C. G. mass campaign lacks true scientific basis and is no more than a form of quackery. It is of no use whatsoever in the vast majority of cases and harmful in quite a few. B.C.G. is based on a weak and undemonstrated theory that artificially produced allergy is a defence, which is not supported by that quantity of confirmation which the method of scientific induction demands before acceptance. It is sought to be guarded and buttressed by admissions that meet every case of proof against it. B. C. G. is of no potency, it is admitted, where the reinfection is strong and this can be an explanation for every failure. In cases where it leads to harm, it is explained by 'low resistance' in the victim. Every circumstance of quackery attends this mass campaign that has been started in India, despite the caution observed in civilized countries abroad wherever it is tried. Indian children are being offered for mass experimentation on the same plan as was put in operation among the people in the war-ravaged areas and uncivilized dependent communities.

Not only is the basis of the B. C. G. scheme scientifically inadequate, but the propaganda employed for its rapid furtherance on a mass scale smacks of the methods of quackery. It has been often officially stated and repeated in the Press that so many lakhs of children have been im-

munized this year against tuberculosis and so many millions will have been immunized by the end of the next two years and so on. Any one who remembers the nature of the very limited claims put forward on behalf of B. C. G. vaccination can discover that the public propaganda in this respect is misleading, because the alleged immunity is not claimed to last more than a couple of years after the child is vaccinated and during even that period it is not potent enough against severe infection, and because there is no scheme for re-vaccination for extending the period of immunity. In fact medical opinion is clear that repeated vaccination with B. C. G. would be dangerous.

This is an issue of general national importance and not a matter to be left for disposal according to the majority opinion among them when experts differ. In the adventures of science opinions may vary. Where it is a matter that does not affect the bulk of the people, the difference of opinion may be left to be solved by the scientists; not so, when on the basis of a theory, men's persons are touched for good or evil.

I am certain that one day in the future this B. C. G. will be declared as of no value and given up by the word of scientists and forgotten. As the Health Department of the Government of India is throwing its great weight on the side of this unscientific adventure, the rejection will take time. Meanwhile the children and the finest section of them all over the land are being deliberately infected on a mass scale with a variety of one of the deadliest living bacilli known to man. Some among the most eminent men of science have expressed their grave doubts as to what the bacilli introduced in the human system may be capable of becoming and doing in the course of time if not at once. The risk is aggravated by the immense number of persons thus affected and by the unavoidable chances of contamination in a hurricane mass campaign.

The stated object of the mass campaign is to prevent the occurrence of clinical tuberculosis among children. In

the first place, the statistical data generally given for mortality among young people from tuberculosis in India are not real statistics but only inferentially deduced conclusions. In the next place, the disease never has occurred or will occur in an epidemic form, so as to justify mass injection with a poison not by any means fully proved to be harmless. Again, the claim put forward for the vaccine is an admittedly undependable immunity and that, too, only for a couple of years. Taking all these into account, one must come to the conclusion that the campaign is thoroughly unjustifiable.

One of the worst incidents of a mass campaign is the ceaseless effort by men whose words carry weight, to rouse a dread of the disease in the vast majority of people. Fear considerably reduces the power of resistance among those who have hitherto coped with dormant infection. Another general consequence of the campaign is the neglect of other measures such as would go far towards real control of tuberculosis.

I am not against modern 'western' therapy or modern science. B. C. G. has nothing to do with modern western medicine. In fact, it is more akin to the principle of homoeopathy than to what is generally known as modern medicine. It proceeds on a creed very similar to that of homoeopathy, namely, that diseases are to be dealt with by the administration in mild forms of the very things that produce the disease. The difference is that the homoeopath does not introduce what multiplies in the human body, but the B. C. G. man introduces a large body of living multiplying organisms, which never leave but are intended to remain for ever in the body of the person vaccinated.

Informed readers have to forgive me for devoting even a little space to this, namely, to point out that the B. C. G. vaccine is not a cure for anything. The claim is that it may serve as a preventive in some cases and for a brief period of time. I need not have had to say this but for the fact that I have met quite a few respectively educated men

who ask why I oppose something that is proposed to relieve sickness! B. C. G. does not relieve any sickness. It is not intended for it.

Quackery is bad whether it be modern or of the time-honoured variety. It is easy to deal with the latter type but modern quackery is difficult to cope with, as it absorbs for its purposes modern medical terminology and methods of procedure.

"A lie which is all a lie  
may be met and fought with outright  
But a lie which is part a truth  
is a harder matter to fight".

A principle is discovered which is not universal but it is sought to apply it to cases, where it cannot be applied, and exposure of error is resisted. B. C. G. is an extension of the principle of immunity underlying the artificial introduction of the very same virus or bacilli that cause the disease, with the object that the human body may be stimulated to produce a defence, as it is observed to do when catching the infection in the normal way. The extension of this principle to tuberculosis is wrong because it is known that tuberculosis infection does not lead to the creation of any defensive antibody in the system. But struggling against this hard fact and insurmountable objection to the applicability of the pasteurian method of producing immunity, the B. C. G. protagonist proceeds to depend on the mere allergy or hypersensitivity created by the introduction of the poison, as a substantial defence against infection and asks us to accept all the unknown risks of the injection for the sake of this allergy, even which admittedly lasts only for a couple of years. The ultimate argument is merely statistical which, according to the best appraisers, as will be seen, is inconclusive. Mere figures of inoculation done, without any well confirmed observation of results as regards immunity, do not form a valid statistical argument beyond proving the energy and resources at the back of the operating organization.

This is what I respectfully say, is the quackery involved in B. C. G. I am not a medical expert. But my conclusions are not based merely on my *a priori* fears and doubts, but on the definite pronouncements of most eminent and illustrious medical men of the civilized world. The Indian medical men that have been recruited by the Health Ministry to conduct and speak for this campaign, the biggest among them, are not as eminent as any of the medical men, on the basis of whose observations and opinions, I have come to the conclusion that this mass campaign of inoculation with live tubercle bacilli is wrong and must be given up.

Newspapers are not all of them very willing to oblige one who opposes a Government-sponsored campaign with large space, even though the subject be of utmost general importance and though the object be to reach truth and not the furtherance of a particular administrative or political policy. Even when they are generous and willing to publish written criticisms or the reports of speeches dealing with the subject, they are necessarily unable to find space for publishing all the authorities that may be quoted or referred to. This booklet is intended to make up for this. I have here collected and present to readers a few important statements of eminent medical men. I have reduced my own remarks to the minimum that is necessary to explain the relevance of the extracts.

—*Hindusthan Standard*, 13-9-1955.

*Editorial Note*—\*Isopathy

There is generally some misconception about Homœopathy as being equivalent to Isopathy, which actually is not the case. While Isopathy, is concerned with the "Idem" or the "Same" in relation to disease principle and medicine, Homœopathy is concerned with the "Similar", not the "Same", in the said sphere.—Editor.