

WAR-TIME STUDIES OF CHAUSSINAND IN INDO-CHINA

TO THE EDITOR:

In reply to your inquiry about my experience with BCG in leprosy, I wish to express my satisfaction that you propose to review the origins of the work in this field.

In order that what follows may be understood, first let me mention my background in the matter. From 1927 to 1930 I was an assistant in the children's clinic of the School of Medicine of Strasbourg, where I studied BCG vaccination and wrote a book on the subject, the preface of which was written by Calmette. In 1931, Calmette sent me to the Institut Pasteur of Saigon to do BCG vaccination. I became interested in leprosy, in addition to the work assigned me, and since 1946 I have worked only in leprosy.

As for my position regarding the beginnings with BCG in that disease, let me first quote what I wrote in the second edition of my book, *La Lèpre*, under the title "Bacterial Parallergies" (p. 63):

To Fernandez goes the credit for having been the first to recognize, in 1939, that the organism infected with tuberculosis may be reactive to lepromin. While isolated by the war in Saigon, I published in 1944 the results of my own studies of the phenomena of allergy and parallergy in leprosy and tuberculosis, studies which had been pursued independently since 1939.

For one thing, I had demonstrated in 1939 that vaccination with BCG might produce a state of protection against tuberculosis despite

the absence of tuberculin allergy (1). Fundamental to this study, I attempted to investigate the phenomena of allergy and parallergy to bacillary bodies in leprosy, tuberculosis and BCG vaccination, and I recognized that the organism (man, monkey or guinea-pig) without leprosy, but infected with tuberculosis or vaccinated with BCG, ordinarily reacts more or less strongly to the Mitsuda antigen. I also experimented with, and proposed, a reaction which indicates, in tuberculosis and especially after BCG vaccination, the state of protection in the absence of tuberculin allergy. This reaction is now known as the BCG test. My name is never mentioned.

It was only in 1944 that I published certain results of those investigations (2-5). Each of these articles was published twice because, having been published in Indo-China during the war they were quite unknown elsewhere. Finally, an article bearing on BCG protection against leprosy was presented at the BCG congress held in Paris 1948 (6). A resumé of these reports will be found in the second edition of my book, in the chapters on Immunology of Leprosy and on Prophylaxis of Leprosy by BCG Vaccination. Not directly bearing on the subject dealt with in them, but related to them, I may mention certain reports of inoculation work in monkeys and guinea-pigs done in Indo-China (7-9).

The reception given all my reports was not encouraging; received only supercilious smiles. The things of which I wrote in those days are now being taken more seriously, but my work concerning the phenomena of allergy to bacillary bodies in tuberculosis and BCG vaccination is never cited.

1. CHAUSSINAND, R. Allergie tuberculique et prémunition dans la vaccination par le BCG. Nouveaux arguments en faveur de la méthode de prémunition de Calmette et Guérin. *Rev. Tuberc. (Paris)* **5** (1939-40) 916; *abst. Bull. Acad. Méd.* **121** (1939) 669.

2. CHAUSSINAND, R. La réaction de Mitsuda, indice de l'immunité relative antilépreuse. *Rev. méd. française Extrême-Orient* **22** (1944) 661; *also, Acta Tropica* **5** (1948) 160-173.

3. CHAUSSINAND, R. Tuberculose et lèpre, maladies antagoniques. Eviction de la lèpre par la tuberculose. *Rev. méd. française Extrême-Orient* **22** (1944) 677; *also, Internat. J. Leprosy* **16** (1948) 431-438.

4. CHAUSSINAND, R. Une nouvelle réaction d'allergie dans la tuberculose. *Rev. méd. française Extrême-Orient* **22** (1944) 799; *also, Ann. Inst. Pasteur* **73** (1947) 811-814.

5. CHAUSSINAND, R. Para-allergies bactériennes dans la tuberculose. *Rev. méd. française Extrême-Orient* **22** (1944) 803; *also, Ann. Inst. Pasteur* **73** (1947) 814-815.

6. CHAUSSINAND, R. Prémunition relative antilépreuse par la vaccination au BCG. I. Congrès Internat. BCG, Paris, 18-23 juin 1948; *also, Rev. Coloniale Méd. et Chir.* **21** (1949) 170.

7. CHAUSSINAND, R. Contributions à l'étude de la lèpre. II. Inoculation du bacille de Hansen au singe. *Internat. J. Leprosy* **9** (1941) 203-208.

8. CHAUSSINAND, R. Transmission réalisée de la lèpre humaine au singe (*Macacus cynomolgus*). *Rev. méd. française Extrême-Orient* **21** (1943) 627-636.

9. CHAUSSINAND, R. Inoculation de la lèpre aux animaux. *Ann. Inst. Pasteur* **73** (1947) 677-683.

Institut Pasteur
Paris, France

R. CHAUSSINAND
Chief, Leprosy Service