

## "DIASONE" A PROPRIETARY NAME

TO THE EDITOR:

In an article entitled "Clinical Evaluation Studies in Lepromatous Leprosy" which appeared in *THE JOURNAL* **25** (1957) 173-192, the name of Abbott's Diasone is used as if it were a common name, to identify the nature of the brand which was used in that study. Actually, Diasone is Abbott's registered trademark for its brand of sulfoxone. We have also noted that when the name was used it was not capitalized, although that was done with the names of certain other drugs.

We fully realize the difficult problem an editor faces in watching out for the many trademark names. However, descriptive or common use of a trademark tends to weaken its exclusive ownership. For example, that is what happened to the once-valuable trademark "aspirin."

That is why we are writing to call your attention to the fact that the name Diasone is the Abbott trademark for sulfoxone. As such, it is a proper name, and when it appears in print the initial letter should be capitalized. Preferably it should be followed by the encircled R symbol, which is the designation suggested by the United States Patent Office to distinguish trademarks from generic names of products, such as penicillin, ether, etc., where the generic name identifies the product itself originating from no particular manufacturer.

You may find it appropriate to print this letter in the Correspondence section of *THE JOURNAL*. We understand your problem. We hope you understand ours, and the friendly spirit in which this letter is written.

*Abbott Laboratories*  
*North Chicago, Ill.*

JOHN H. SCHNEIDER  
*Patent and Trademark Counsel*

[The writer of the above letter has been assured that the proprietary name Diasone will be capitalized in the future, although in common usage it seems already to have met the fate of "aspirin" that he cites. As for the encircled R symbol, signifying "registered," it is not in international usage, nor in fact is it used religiously in all reputable American periodicals. We would be likely not only to make errors of omission, but also error of commission, like the one cited in a news item in the first issue of the present volume. An editor had added that symbol to the (capitalized) word "dapsona," which on inquiry was found to be the generic name adopted by the General Medical Council in the United Kingdom for diaminodiphenyl sulfone (DDS).

[Proprietary and nonproprietary (or generic) names are liable to be confusing. From the Pharmaceutical Section of WHO in Geneva, through the kindness of Dr. Mario Giaquinto, has come a reminder that in France DDS is marketed by the Theraplix company as "Disulone," and in England by Imperial Chemical Pharmaceuticals, Ltd., under the trade name

“Avlosulphone.” (Actually, in the WHO communication this word was spelled “Avlosulfon,” which is not the form used by the manufacturer.)

[Two other names the meaning of which may not be understood are “solapsone” and “solasulfone.” The former has been seen repeatedly in publications, and we are informed that it is a British approved name (British Pharmaceutical Codex 1954). The latter was published in the *WHO Chronicle* [10 (1956) 34] as a “proposed international non-proprietary name,” preferred over the former. Both signify the product of Burroughs Wellcome put out under the trade name Sulphetrone.

[This word game could doubtless be extended considerably, particularly if one were to collect the trade names of South American manufacturers of the sulfone derivatives.—EDITOR.]