

CORRESPONDENCE

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INTRODUCTION OF PROMIN IN TREATMENT

TO THE EDITOR:

In the matter of the introduction of Promin in the treatment of leprosy, I have had discussions with the late Dr. James A. Doull, a recent paper by whom [*Internat. J. Leprosy* **31** (1963) 143-160] deals with the subject at length. My protest was that the idea that Promin might be helpful in leprosy first came from Dr. Walter M. Simpson, Director of Kettering Institute for Medical Research (and USPHS), in a personal conversation with me December 28, 1939. I immediately got some Promin from Dr. E. A. Sharp of Parke, Davis & Company, and with Dr. Chanai Ruangsiri I tried it in rat leprosy. We found that it was well tolerated by our rats, and that their nodules decreased in size to some extent. This we duly reported [*Arch. Path.* **32** (1941) 632-640]. As I was working under the Public Health Service at that time, I wrote to Dr. James P. Leake suggesting that Promin be tried out on humans. Considerably later Dr. G. H. Faget wrote me from Carville asking for our experience with the drug, which I gladly gave him. The whole story can, of course, be obtained from Sharp.

The next thing that happened was that Faget and associates published a paper [*Publ. Hlth. Rep* **58** (1943) 1729-1741] on the treatment of cases at Carville, where I had previously worked. In the introductory paragraph of this paper it was said that in murine leprosy "the reports (*sic*) are suggestive of slight action," with a reference to the report of Cowdry and Ruangsiri. There was no acknowledgement of Faget's request to me for information, or of my answer. Then, Faget died suddenly at the Public Health Service hospital in New Orleans, and I did not feel like following the matter up any further until Doull started to write his account of the matter and had some correspondence with me about it. In his paper he did not acknowledge that the first suggestion came from Simpson and that the first work was done by Ruangsiri and me; he merely said vaguely, in a footnote, that Simpson was somehow connected with the matter.

The hub of the matter, he claimed, was that Simpson could not have told me of the results of the work of Feldman and Hinshaw on the influence of Promin in experimental tuberculosis. Actually, I think that, knowing of the proposed work of Feldman and Hinshaw, Simpson thought that it would be a good idea to try the drug in leprosy, which it certainly was. Sharp tells me that Simpson was in a position to know about their work, but he could not say positively that he did know about it. But how else could I have been led to procure the drug and try it out

on rat leprosy? Now Doull has also died, and so it is very difficult for me to make any progress in giving Simpson credit for the idea and recognition of our efforts to test the idea on rats.

*Department of Anatomy
Washington University
School of Medicine
St. Louis 10, Missouri*

E V. COWDRY, M.D.