

TO THE EDITOR:

About the use of Zenker's fluid for fixation of leprosy tissues, I am in entire agreement with you as to its superiority over formalin. Throughout the long years of my work in Calcutta, I used it routinely with very satisfactory results.

Histologic work at this institution started with the establishment of the laboratories after Dr. S. G. S. Iyer joined as head of the Division of Laboratories. During his previous training, which was that of a neuropathologist, formalin was his choice of a fixative because of the wide range of staining procedures that can be applied to formalin-fixed tissues. Further, because of his special interest in the study of cutaneous nerves by the silver impregnation method, for which Zenker's fluid is not suitable, he had preferred to use formalin, particularly in those instances where the amount of tissue was restricted. In such instances paraffin sections were zenkerized for routine examination. However, on examining these sections, my opinion about the superiority of Zenker fixation was confirmed, since the formalin sections showed considerable shrinkage.

A comparative study was therefore undertaken of Zenker and formalin fixations, and there is no doubt that Zenker's fluid is a better fixative for most routine procedures, a fact about which there has never been any serious doubt in our minds. The question here was to use a procedure of a fixation which would permit of tissues being stained with as wide a variety of techniques as possible. The procedure followed at present is that large biopsy specimens are divided into two and fixed separately in Zenker's and formalin, respectively. However, if the biopsy specimen is small, then we restrict ourselves only to techniques possible with Zenker fixation.

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