

ON STANDARD DEFINITIONS

In correspondence submitted to the *Archives of Dermatology* [90 (1964) 454] Drs. Thomas L. Watt and Otis F. Jillson point out that:

It is surprising that standard definitions of most primary lesions have never been agreed upon by dermatologists. This became apparent to us in a recent departmental conference, when members of the same institution disagreed on the meanings of such elementary terms as *macule*, *papule*, *nodule*, *tumor*, *vesicle*, and *bulla*. Indeed, when we turned to various textbooks for substantiation, we found there was no unanimity of thought among the several authors as to the exact definitions of these "primary lesions." The situation has been compounded over the years because of the failure of the authorities (1) to concur in size limitations of most of the lesions, (2) to appreciate the dimension of depth intrinsic to nodules and tumors, and (3) to expand the terminology to include such lesions as *patches* and *plaques*.

There follows a discussion of textbook usages of, most important, *macule* and *patch* (the former a small flat lesion, the latter a larger one), also of *papule* and *plaque* (again small *versus* larger), and of *nodules* and *tumors*. They invite discussion of the following definitions, saying that the 1 cm. cutoff point had been found practical in use.

- Macule: up to 1.0 cm in size, circumscribed, flat, color change
- Patch: > 1.0 cm in size, circumscribed, flat, color change
- Papule: up to 1.0 cm in size, circumscribed, elevated, superficial, solid
- Plaque: > 1.0 cm in size, circumscribed, elevated, superficial, solid
- Nodule: up to 1.0 cm in size, solid with depth
- Tumor: > 1.0 cm in size, solid with depth
- Vesicle: up to 1.0 cm in size, circumscribed, elevated, fluid-filled
- Bulla: > 1.0 cm in size, circumscribed, elevated, fluid-filled
- Pustule: varies in size, circumscribed, elevated, pus-filled
- Wheal: varies in size, elevated, transient

Note is made here of these proposals for the same purpose, to invite comments by leprologists as to their suitability for use in leprosy.—H. W. W.