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Clinical Observations in the Treatment of Leprosy Reaction with Cyclic Imides

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We will report shortly on the clinical observations we made using cyclic imides (c.i.) in the treatment of lepra reactions. The compounds were synthesized by Chemie Grünethal and the trial was undertaken in cooperation with this firm.

With regard to the immunosuppressive actions of c.i. and their relationship to thalidomide, we refer to yesterday's paper by Mückter. In accord with the results of Waters, Turk and Wemambu on the mechanism of lepra reactions an effect of c.i. on erythema nodosum leprosum could be expected. Sheskin has just reported extensively on experiences with thalidomide in lepra reactions.

Thanks to many sources of support we were able to perform an informative trial on the effect of c.i. in the treatment of lepra reactions. It was possible to undertake this in the leprosarium Bisidimo/Ethiopia. In this trial only male patients were treated. We used the following compounds: CG 601, CG 809, CG 603, CG 805 and CG 817. Normally the daily dose was 400 mgm; in some cases it was 600 mgm. The effect of each of the drugs was compared with the effect of thalidomide, which was used in a daily dose of 400 mgm.

Forty-two patients suffering from erythema nodosum leprosum were treated with c.i. We compared them with nine patients treated with thalidomide. The selection of patients was made statistically. (For his support we thank Dr. Njissen from Stollberg.)

In this informative study we found all compounds effective in the treatment of erythema nodosum leprosum. There did not seem to be a clear effect on other forms of lepra reaction. We did not find any difference in the effectiveness of thalidomide and c.i. Regarding this question more extensive observations will be necessary. Side effects of c.i. were not seen.

SUMMARY

Cyclic imides were effective in the treatment of erythema nodosum leprosum in our patients. No difference was seen in the effectiveness of c.i. and thalidomide.

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