

Rethinking About Iodine in Leprosy

TO THE EDITOR:

At the start of the sulfone era the hottest thing was iodine. Muir was for it, with reservations; Jeanselme was against it, with some bias. I do not think it has received a fair trial.

Iodine kills mycobacteria, all kinds of them. Even Jeanselme agrees it melts them out of the cells.

As for the drawbacks, perhaps we know better today. It starts reactions, of course. Which active remedy doesn't? It takes enormous dangerous doses. Maybe not after all. We know that today it takes a long time to sweep the *M. leprae* out of the slides. Maybe much smaller reasonable dosages will do

just as well if only we would wait for a reasonable time.

And today we have mouse foot pads, armadillos, and even *in vitro* crops. We can give iodine a real chance at last. It has a right to be tested among the first. After all, it does not have to be the best of remedies in order to prove a useful one. Perhaps it might be handy just for a final good pounding and clobbering of the last surviving bugs before dismissing the young strong patient.

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