

Investigation of Chemical Compounds with Antileprosy Activity

TO THE EDITOR:

One of the fields of investigation in the leprosy division of O.M.S. is THELEP which has, among other purposes, the pur-

pose of finding drugs with antileprosy activity. This can be accomplished by the only two experimental models known up to the present, that is inoculation of *M. leprae* into the mouse foot pad (Shepard), or inoculation

of the bacillus into nine-banded armadillos (Kirchheimer-Storrs).

Even though Shepard's model has been known since 1960, practically no antileprosy drug has been discovered through its use; and because of this it is very doubtful that such an event may happen sometime in the future.

The method of Kirchheimer-Storrs is not suitable at all as a screening method for antileprosy drugs. It is not practical, is very expensive, and it is not possible to use many animals—a condition of fundamental importance when screening methods are concerned.

Due to these facts, these two methods have been the subjects of many criticisms. We sug-

gest instead the following method: to investigate the *in vitro* antioxidant activity of biologic as well as industrial antioxidants by using as substrate, that is, the fatty material, a synthetic mixture of fats quite similar to the human subcutaneous fat of leprosy patients, or of normal persons living in countries where leprosy is highly endemic. From the most powerful antioxidants found to act upon such fats it would be advisable to test their antileprosy activity in patients.

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