

"LEPROLIN" VS "LEPROMIN"

Multiplicity of names for the same thing being undesirable, we have lately been led to consider the claims to validity of the words "leprolin" and "lepromin" for the name of the suspension that is used for making the Mitsuda test. The former word has long been so widely used that the latter has seemed intrusive, but we now find ourselves under the necessity of denying the old friend and taking to heart the other claimant.

Apparently "leprolin" was used first by Rost¹ for a preparation made from a bouillon culture in which active leproma tissue had been placed and in which the bacilli had multiplied, after which the fluid was processed like old tuberculin, and for other preparations by the same worker it was used for many years. Since then it has also been applied repeatedly to other products of more or less similar nature, most recently by Lleras Acosta.² How it came to be applied to the very different material used in the test now in question is not clear. Certainly it was not introduced by Mitsuda himself, for in the first publication by him in a European language, the brief note read at the Strasbourg conference,³ he only spoke of the material as an "emulsion." It was called a "vaccine" by F. Hayashi,⁴ who brought the test clearly to attention ten years later. At any rate it was called leprolin in Tropical Diseases Bulletin,⁵ in an abstract of one of Bargehr's reports, though he had specifically given the

¹ ROST, E. R. *Indian Med. Gaz.* 39 (1904) May, June and December.

² LLERAS ACOSTA, F. *Rev. Facul. Med.* (Bogotá) 1 (1933) No. 12; 3 (1935) No. 12; 5 (1936) 1-199.

³ MITSUDA, K. 3^{me} Conf. Internat. de la Lepre, 1923, Commun. et Débats. Paris, 1924, Bailliere et Fils, pp. 219-220.

⁴ HAYASHI, F. *THE JOURNAL* 1 (1933) 31-38.

⁵ TROPICAL DISEASES BULLETIN 27 (1924) 910.

name "lepromin" to the preparation which he used.⁶ The other term was adopted by Rogers⁷ in a note which undoubtedly served to focus attention on the test itself, and since then it has been used by all but a few writers.

Regarding the origin of "lepromin," though he did not say so Bargehr obviously derived it from "leproma," from which the substance was made, by substituting the terminal *-a* with *-in*, a long-established practice in immunological terminology. "Leprolin" cannot be so explained, the *-l-* being quite foreign to the stem word in any of its forms. One can only surmise that it was concocted with "tuberculin" in mind, the fact being overlooked that in that case the *-l-* belonged to the stem word itself (e.g., *tubercul-osis*) and was not a part of the suffix.

"Leprin," the real analog of "tuberculin," was applied in 1896 by Babes⁸ to a glycerinated leproma extract which was assumed to be of similar nature to tuberculin, and it was also used by Scholtz and Klingmüller⁹ for a similar preparation. That term may well be held in reserve until a product more like that substance is made—as perhaps has been done already by Villela.¹⁰

In the meantime, for the substance used in the Mitsuda test, composed of whole bacilli plus tissue elements, the irreproachable word "lepromin" not only has priority but has the advantages of signifying the nature of the material of which it is made, and of not having been used for something else.

—H. W. W.

⁶ BARGEHR, P. *Muenchener med. Wchnschr.* (1926) 2209-2210; also *Geneesk. Tijdschr. Nederlandsch-Indië* 66 (1926) 603-609.

⁷ ROGERS, L. *Lep. Rev.* 1 (1930) No. 3, 9-10.

⁸ BABES, V. *Die Lepra.* Wien, Alfred Holder, 1901.

⁹ SCHOLTZ, W. and KLINGMÜLLER, V. *Lepra* 1 (1900) 93-103.

¹⁰ VILLELA, G. G. *Trans. Cairo Congress, 1938* (in press); abstract in *THE JOURNAL* 6 (1938) 462.