THE LEPROMIN TEST

To the Editor:

I have read with much interest the article on the lepromin test by Dr. A. Rotberg which appeared in the April-June issue of The Journal. Any one who has used this test can appreciate the difficulties in reading the resulting reaction mentioned by

the author, and my own experience confirms his observation that the positive reaction in lepromatous cases is generally different from that seen in the tuberculoid subtype.

In my earlier work with this test I recorded two tuberculoid cases as negative at the end of 28 days. When examined on the 42nd day, however, both had become 2 – plus and the papules continued to enlarge, albeit slowly, up to 63rd day when the readings were discontinued. Such cases seem to be comparatively rare, however.

The editorial of Dr. Muir touching on more or less the same subject which appears in the same issue of THE JOURNAL is both timely and stimulating. His suggestions to the effect that the lepromin test be tried on an extensive scale in endemic as well as nonendemic countries, and that the test material be produced in a central laboratory for distribution to workers in different parts of the world, should be seriously considered. I would suggest that a "Lepromin Committee" might be appointed by the general council of the International Leprosy Association for the purpose of realizing these aims.

I would suggest also that the testing of animals with lepromin be undertaken on a scientific scale. The main advantage of employing laboratory animals is that it will permit the study of possible effects of deficiencies of vitamins, minerals, etc., in the diet; the influence of hormones; and the effects of septic conditions, tuberculous and other secondary infections, etc. on the resulting reaction following this test.

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