

ference of viewpoint, and therefore the presentation without either any discussion on the part of the editor, the presentation of another viewpoint in the form of an article differently oriented or bibliographic references may do an injustice to the subject-matter.

It is indeed no simple matter to select out of the enormous literature which the general subject-matter covers forty-five articles and say that these are the important contributions to psychopathology. In view of this difficulty the reviewer must give full-hearted appreciation of the articles selected. There is none that is not important, that is not stimulating and that does not make good reading.

It seems hardly reasonable to pick out any special

article either for commendation or in criticism of its selection, nor would it be profitable to attempt to discuss one or a few of the forty-five contributions.

The reviewer would, therefore, conclude that it is worth the time of any physician interested in psychopathology and medical students to read most, if not all the articles in this compilation. Graduate students of psychology and some mature undergraduates will also benefit from a study of the selections, but should realize that many of the articles need medical experience to be properly evaluated.

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REPORTS

OVER-THE-COUNTER SALE OF SULFONAMIDE DRUGS¹

SECTION 118 of the Sanitary Code of the City of New York prohibits the sale of sulfonamide drugs, whether for internal or external use, without a prescription. Two groups of sulfonamide preparations are excepted, namely, sulfonamide nose drops containing not more than 2.5 per cent. of sulfa drugs and adhesive bandages containing sulfathiazole. (The usual concentration of the drug in these bandages is 6 to 12 mgms of sulfathiazole per inch of bandage.) These two exceptions have been allowed because (1) the Federal Food and Drug Administration permits the over-the-counter sale of these products, provided they bear proper precautionary labels and directions for use, and (2) at the time this ruling was made there was no actual proof that the external use of the sulfa drugs in small concentrations had caused any harm.

For advertising reasons sulfa drugs are now being added to various kinds of salves, tape bandages, shaving creams and similar products which are sold under well-established proprietary names. Of late, one of the drug concerns applied to the Health Department for permission to sell without prescription a suspension containing 5 per cent. of sulfathiazole. In view of this and in view of the fact that more and more reports appear in the literature to the effect that topical application of the sulfa drugs can arouse a hypersensitivity resembling an allergic phenomenon, the Commissioner of Health submitted to the committee the question of what action the Board of Health should take in this regard.

After looking into the matter carefully, your subcommittee has come to the conclusion that clinical experience bears out the fact that a small percentage

of people become sensitized to the sulfonamide drugs, that a severe systemic reaction may be produced in these persons when the drugs are administered a second time and that a minute amount of the sulfonamide drugs applied to the unbroken skin or to the mucous membranes can and does sensitize an individual even more quickly and with greater certainty than when such drugs are administered by mouth.

Because such sensitization is often dangerous and prevents the use of the sulfonamide drugs in treatment of conditions in which they are particularly indicated, because over-the-counter sale of preparations containing sulfonamides will expose many persons to the danger of sensitization, and because the wide use of the sulfonamide drugs in ineffective concentrations may result in an increase in organisms resistant to the sulfonamides, your subcommittee recommends that, until such time as clinical evidence may justify a contrary course of action, Section 118 of the Sanitary Code of the City of New York be so amended as to eliminate all exceptions from the clause which prohibits the over-the-counter sale of sulfonamide preparations.

The subcommittee wishes to suggest the desirability of making this recommendation known to the general public. The subcommittee likewise considers it desirable to issue a statement on the part of the Committee on Public Health Relations to the general profession warning against the unnecessary use of sulfonamide preparations for the treatment of minor conditions.

Respectfully submitted:

GEORGE MILLER MACKEE, *Chairman*
MCKEEN CATTELL
RUSSELL L. CECIL
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E. H. L. CORWIN, *Secretary*

Approved by the Committee on Public Health Relations on March 5, 1945.

¹ Report of the Subcommittee of the Committee on Public Health Relations of the New York Academy of Medicine.