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## Inadequate Maternal Nutrition and Hydrocephalus in Infant Rats<sup>1</sup>

LUTHER R. RICHARDSON and JEANNE DEMOTTIER

*Division of Chemistry,  
Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, College Station*

Richardson and Hogan (1) observed hydrocephalus in infant rats as the result of feeding an inadequate diet to the mother. In this abnormality the head is dome shaped and greatly enlarged. The brain cavity is filled with serum and transmits light readily. In some cases the eyes are abnormally small and muscular incoordination usually develops if the affected rat survives long enough.

In order to demonstrate more conclusively that hydrocephalus is caused by a nutritional deficiency it seemed desirable to produce the abnormality in an unrelated colony of rats. The colony at the Texas Station, which has been maintained for more than 10 years without the introduction of any new strains, was suitable for such a study. A total of 38 females have received Diet A, which is essentially the same in composition as that used by Richardson and Hogan. This diet is composed of casein (acid washed), 25 grams; Cerelose, 57 grams; wood pulp, 3 grams; salts, 5 grams; lard, 10 grams; choline chloride,<sup>2</sup> 0.1 gram; inositol,<sup>2</sup> 0.01 gram; p-aminobenzoic acid,<sup>2</sup> 0.05 gram; vitamin A, 3,000 I.U.; vitamin D, 425 I.U.;  $\alpha$ -tocopherol,<sup>2</sup> 2.5 mg.; Menadione,<sup>2</sup> 2.5 mg.; thiamine chloride,<sup>2</sup> 1.0 mg.; riboflavin,<sup>2</sup> 1.0 mg.; pyridoxine hydrochloride,<sup>2</sup> 1.0 mg.; calcium pantothenate,<sup>2</sup> 4.0 mg.; niacin,<sup>2</sup> 5.0 mg.; and biotin,<sup>2</sup> 0.02 mg.

Some of the experimental females were from mothers which received a stock diet and others were from mothers which received a synthetic diet, but in every case they received Diet A from 28 days of age until the observations were discontinued. A female was observed until it was evident that she would not produce any additional young.

A total of 10 young have developed typical hydrocephalus. The incidence was 1.5 per cent, or approximately the same as that given in the earlier report. None has occurred in the offspring of females which received a stock diet composed of

natural feedstuffs. The hydrocephalus in 5 of the 10 young was identified at birth. It was identified again in these same young when they were 10 days old by observing the transmission of light through the brain cavity, and finally by autopsy. It was not identified in the other 5 until they were about 10 days old. Twelve additional young appeared to be hydrocephalic at birth, but none of these survived longer than two days, and these early identifications have not been entirely reliable.

Richardson and Hogan observed one case of hydrocephalus in the offspring of a mother which received 5 per cent of dried yeast in the diet. This observation suggested that a small amount of yeast in the diet would furnish very little, if any, of the factor which prevents hydrocephalus, and at the same time it would supply sufficient pteroylglutamic acid for normal reproduction.

Intestinal synthesis of some unrecognized factor might decrease the incidence of hydrocephalus, even though the diet itself was low in this factor. The addition of a sulfonamide to the diet would decrease this intestinal synthesis and thus increase the incidence of the abnormality. In order to test this possibility 12 females were given Diet B, which is the same as Diet A with 2 per cent of dried yeast and 1 per cent of sulfasuxidine substituted for equal amounts of Cerelose. So far, these 12 females have produced 92 young and none has been hydrocephalic. These data are too insufficient to be conclusive, but they indicate that the addition of sulfasuxidine to the diet does not increase the incidence of the abnormality under these conditions.

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## Effect of Flavonols on *Clostridium botulinum*

A. A. ANDERSEN and J. A. BERRY

*Western Regional Research Laboratory,<sup>1</sup>  
Albany, California*

While conducting experiments on the microbial spoilage of vegetables, the authors found that, although asparagus is readily attacked by many organisms, it is a poor medium for growth of *Clostridium botulinum*. The thought was entertained that the flavonol compound described by Campbell (1) as occurring plentifully in asparagus, and subsequently shown by DeEds and Couch (2) to be rutin, might be responsible. Following the report by Naghski, Copley, and Couch (3) on the suppression of *Staphylococcus aureus* by quercetin, an aglucone derivative of rutin, tests were made to determine the action of rutin, quercetin, and quercitrin<sup>2</sup> (a rhamnoside of quercetin) on *Cl. botulinum*. Three sets of flasks, each flask containing 15 grams of green peas and 15 ml. of corn steep-casein medium, were inoculated with a mixture of approximately 1,000 detoxified spores of *Cl. botulinum*, Types A and B, per flask. The reaction of the medium was pH 6.60. One flask in each set was left untreated as control. Weighed amounts

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<sup>2</sup> Kindly supplied by Merck and Company, Rahway, New Jersey.