

'ROCHE' News in Brief

Vitamin C Saturation in Hospital Children

From the results of an extensive investigation recently completed at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Glasgow, the authors concluded that "while full saturation may not be necessary for the maintenance of health, it appears to us that children living in slums where acute infections are so prevalent should have ample supplies of vitamin C, because with the onset of infection their reserves tend to become exhausted. Similarly, in the medical wards of children's hospitals, precautions should be taken to ensure that ample vitamin C in one form or another is given to all patients." (*Glasgow Med. Journ.*, 1944, 24, p. 55.)

'Prostigmin' and Blood Clotting

A heparin tolerance test has recently been devised which is considered to be valuable in showing delicate changes in the blood clotting mechanism. By means of this test the author has shown that autonomic stimulation shortens the coagulation time whilst vagal stimulation prolongs it. 'Prostigmin' was found to raise the heparin curve, and when given post-operatively in gynaecological cases prevented the flattening of the curve seen during the first 2 to 4 days after operation when the danger from thrombosis is greatest. "'Prostigmin' in our experience has improved the clotting tendency of the post-operative state and is useful to combat post-operative atony of the intestines and bladder." (*Arch. Surg.*, 1944, 48, p. 105.)

Biological Activity of the Tocopherols

The vitamin E fraction of wheat-germ oil presents a mixture of alpha, beta and gamma tocopherols while the synthetic tocopherol preparation consists only of the alpha isomer. In a recent paper in the *Journal of Nutrition* (25 (5), 433-440, 1943) entitled "Biological Determination of Vitamin E," it is reported that—according to feeding tests—synthetic alpha, beta and gamma tocopherols and α -tocopheryl acetate have the relative biological activities of 100, 25, 19 and 100 respectively. Rats on a low vitamin E diet gained weight during pregnancy in direct proportion to the amount of α -tocopherol given. These tests point to the superior action of α -tocopheryl over the beta and gamma isomers respectively.

Sulphonamide Sensitivity

Striking results from the use of ascorbic acid to relieve the effects of sensitivity to sulphapyridine are reported by Schropp. In a case of pneumonia in a child the first dose of sulphapyridine produced herpes labialis, soreness of the mouth and eyes, soreness and bleeding of the gums and vesicles on the mucous membrane of the lip. A 50-mg. dose of ascorbic acid given with each subsequent dose relieved all these side-reactions, and 18 hours after the first dose of ascorbic acid the temperature had fallen, and the soreness of the mouth and gums had disappeared. (*Canad. Med. Assoc. Journ.*, 1943, 49, p. 515.)

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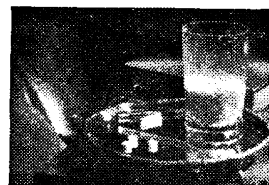
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