years before the establishment of a diagnosis of phaeochromocytoma. Beer, King, and Prinzmetal (1937) reported a case in which adenocarcinoma of the thyroid was removed surgically nine years before an operation for left adrenal phaeochromocytoma. Muntz, Richey, and Gatch (1947) reported a case with bilateral adrenal tumours and associated metastatic thyroid carcinoma. A hemithyroidectomy had been performed nine years previously, but no histological report was quoted. Dick, Ritchie, and Thompson (1955) described a phaeochromocytoma which was successfully removed surgically. Eighteen months later the patient developed a mass in the left side of his neck which was subsequently confirmed as being carcinoma—developing in a simple adenoma of the thyroid.

It is interesting to note that in the present case the onset of the attack was so rapid and the symptoms referable to the central nervous system were so striking that the general practitioner made the provisional diagnosis of "meningitis."

Four previous cases have been found in the literature, and a fifth one is reported in this communication. Four of these five patients are females. Their ages varied from 25 to 63 years, and the three youngest were 25, 26, and 29. No theory has been proposed to explain why phaeochromocytoma and carcinoma of the thyroid should be associated.

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Triamcinolone and Fluocinolone Acetonide Ointments in Atopic Eczema

The excellent antipruritic and anti-inflammatory effects of hydrocortisone in local applications have been well proved, both by ordinary clinical experience and by the many controlled series comparing and contrasting these preparations with a similar inert base. More recently ointments, creams, and lotions containing 0.1% triamcinolone acetonide have been found to be more effective than those containing hydrocortisone (Smith, Zawisza, and Blank, 1958; Vickers and Tighe, 1960; Polano, 1961).

Therefore it was thought worth while attempting a comparison between the proved effects of 0.1% triamcinolone acetonide ointment and the newer synthetic corticosteroid fluocinolone acetonide ointment 0.025%. This drug is chemically 6 α -9 α -difluoro-16-hydroxyprednisolone 16,17-acetonide. Encouraging reports on its use have already been reported from the United States, such as that by Robinson (1961), who found that this application was as effective as 0.1% triamcinolone acetonide and superior to 1% hydrocortisone in diseases normally responsive to local steroid treatment.

INVESTIGATION

It was thought that a single type of eczema should be selected for such a trial and that atopic eczema (Besnier's prurigo; asthma-eczema) would be ideal for this purpose. This disease was selected for the following reasons: (1) it is relatively common; (2) it tends to relapse in winter, when this trial was done; (3) the clinical appearances are distinctive and pruritus is intense; and (4) the age-group of the patients was similar, the average age being almost exactly 20.

Each patient was supplied with two 15-g. tubes of ointment labelled "X" or "Y" and instructed to apply the ointment night and morning to the face and neck only, the other affected areas being left as a control on the same treatment as previously. All of those in the trial had been patients treated at the department during recent months. They were asked to report after 14 days' treatment, and the response was assessed as follows: group 1, clear—complete freedom from itching and visual evidence of eczema; group 2, improved—pruritus or skin changes improved but still present; group 3, *in statu quo*—no change in signs or symptoms; group 4, worse—itching or eczema more evident.

RESULTS

At the end of the experiment it was discovered that ointment X was the fluocinolone acetonide and ointment Y the triamcinolone acetonide. Statistically the results (see Table) show no appreciable superiority of one drug

Results in 33 Cases

	Group 1 (Clear)	Group 2 (Improved)	Group 3 (I.S.Q.)	Group 4 (Worse)	Total
Ointment X	12	4	0	0	16
" Y	10	6	1	0	17

over the other, but it can be said that fluocinolone acetonide is at least as effective as triamcinolone acetonide.

These are expensive drugs to use in a chronic disease which is apt to relapse when treatment is stopped, but they have an excellent effect in controlling the severe itching and in making highly sensitive youngsters more able to face the world with no visible rash. The fluocinolone ointment is less expensive than those containing triamcinolone.

There was no significant improvement on those areas—for example, the arms—on which the previous treatment had been continued.

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