TREATMENT OF HERPES ZOSTER WITH LIVER EXTRACT

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Although the eruption of herpes zoster may appear without discomfort, the pain associated with the condition is sometimes considerable; and post-herpetic neuralgia may occur with such severity and persistence that, as Osler (1898) recorded, it has been known to drive a patient to commit suicide. The treatments recommended have been legion, including iron, arsenic, strychnine, gelsemium, valerian, and aconite, as well as the customary analgesics; freezing, liniments, diathermy, and the injection of distilled water beneath the skin have also been used.

Dickie (1946) relieved herpetic pain in prisoners of war by use of injections of liver extract, which was the only drug available. I have since had the opportunity of observing the effect of liver extract administered empirically to 20 patients with herpes zoster. In all cases the preparation used was "neo-hepatex," administered intramuscularly.

Case Histories

Case 1.—June 19, 1946. Male aged 76. Herpes of left forehead, with severe pain. Dosage: 4 ml. The following day there was no pain and the lesion had not extended. A further 2 ml. was given the next day. There was no post-herpetic pain or recurrence.

Case 2.—July 20, 1946. Male aged 47. Herpes of forehead. Dosage: 4 ml. first day, followed by 2 ml. on the two ensuing days. Pain ceased after the first injection.

Case 3.—Oct. 2, 1946. Female aged 71. Herpes involving the twelfth thoracic segment on the left side, with severe pain. Dosage: Two injections of 4 ml., with three days' interval. Pain completely relieved by Oct. 7.

Case 4.—Oct. 3, 1946. Female aged 63. Herpes of left side of head and neck, with severe pain. Dosage: 4 ml. on Oct. 3 and Oct. 5. Completely free from pain after Oct. 5.

Case 5.—Oct. 4, 1946. Male aged 16. Herpes of right buttock and thigh, with moderate pain. Dosage: 4 ml. Pain and vesicles disappeared in 24 hours.

Case 6.—Oct. 14, 1946. Male aged 77. Complained of post-herpetic neuralgia for 10 months. Dosage: 4 ml., with relief of pain. A further 4 ml. was injected on Oct. 16.

Case 7.—Oct. 28, 1946. Male aged 68. Post-herpetic neuralgia for 15 months. Three injections of 4 ml. produced no diminution of pain.

Case 8.—Nov. 28, 1946. Male aged 38. Herpes genitalis for 6 weeks. Dosage: 4 ml. on two successive days. By Dec. 3 the herpes had disappeared.

Case 9.—Jan. 13, 1947. Male aged 23. Herpes of left chest, with moderate pain. Dosage: 4 ml. on three successive days. Pain-free on Jan. 16.

Case 10.—Jan. 14, 1947. Female aged 75. Three days' history of herpes of right thigh, groin, and lower abdomen, with severe pain. Dosage: 4 ml. on two successive days. Complete relief of pain.

Case 11.—May 5, 1947. Female aged 56. Herpes of right upper thorax, right shoulder, and neck, associated with severe pain. Dosage: 4 ml. on May 5 and May 6; 2 ml. on May 10. The pain became considerably less by May 8, and the patient was pain-free on May 12.

Case 12.—July 1, 1947. Female aged 59. Two weeks' history of herpes of forehead, with moderate pain. Dosage: 4 ml. on July 1 and July 2, with diminution of pain.

Case 13.—July 14, 1947. Male aged 66. Herpes of left face for a week. Dosage: 4 ml. on July 15, 17, and 19. Pain relieved after first injection. Pain-free by July 26.

Case 14.—Sept. 8, 1947. Male aged 34. Two days' history of herpes of left groin. Dosage: 4 ml. on Sept. 8, 9, 12, and 15. By Sept. 15 he was pain-free and the rash had faded.

Case 15.—Sept. 18, 1947. Female aged 26. Herpes of left face, with considerable pain and constitutional disturbance. Dosage: 4 ml. on Sept. 20. This had no effect on the condition, which cleared, however, by Oct. 9.

Case 16.—Sept. 24, 1947. Male aged 22. Herpes of left chest. Dosage: 4 ml. on Sept. 24 and 25, with relief of pain.

Case 17.—Dec. 1, 1947. Female aged 67. One week's history of herpes of upper right chest. Two days previously the rash had spread to the right side of the neck and face, and there was considerable pain and malaise. Dosage: 4 ml. on Dec. 1, 2, and 8. Pain lessened after the first dose and completely disappeared by Dec. 12.

Case 18.—Jan. 21, 1948. Female aged 31. Two days' history of herpes of the left chest, with pain. Dosage: 4 ml. on Jan. 21. Pain-free, with no further extension of the rash by Jan. 24.

Case 19.—July 10, 1948. Female aged 58. One week's history of herpes of the left side of the neck. Dosage: 4 ml. on the succeeding two days. Pain was relieved by July 12, and had completely disappeared by July 19.

Case 20.—Aug. 19, 1948. Male aged 73. One day's history of herpes of right hip and abdomen, with severe pain and malaise. Dosage: 4 ml. on Aug. 19 and 21, with relief of pain.

REFERENCES

- Dickie, H. (1946). *British Medical Journal*, 1, 942.
Osler, W. (1898). *Principles and Practice of Medicine*, New York.

Medical Memoranda

A Case of Abortus Infection treated with "Aureomycin"

Spink *et al.* (1948) reported a series of 24 cases of human brucellosis due to *Br. melitensis* treated in Mexico with "aureomycin" (Lederle Laboratories). They say: "In such a disease a long follow-up study will be necessary to evaluate the drug completely. . . . But the immediate results of treatment have been so encouraging and so unexpected that this report is being made." The following is an account of a case of *Br. abortus* infection in which the immediate results were striking also.

CASE REPORT

The patient, a man aged 58, became ill fairly abruptly in the middle of February, 1949, at a time of influenza prevalence. The persistence of the illness led to its differentiation from influenza, and a blood agglutination reaction on March 16 gave a titre to *Br. abortus* of 1:500, less decisively 1:1,000. At this time the pyrexia was mainly at night, and often there was a night sweat. He was given 36 g. of sulphamezathine over six days without effect. The pyrexia next became diurnal also and the number of sweats increased to several in a 24-hour period. At this stage he was admitted to hospital on March 28, about six weeks from the onset.

His general condition was comparatively good, but he was anxious about his apparently interminable, uncomfortable, and incapacitating illness. Clinical examination did not reveal anything inconsistent with brucellosis; no enlargement of the spleen was detected. Agglutination reactions again gave 1:500 to *Br. abortus*, and blood culture was negative. An issue of streptomycin was obtained, but no apparent effect from the drug was noted with a dosage of $\frac{1}{2}$ g. intramuscularly every six hours, and after five days the drug was stopped. Two days later aureomycin was started by mouth and given as follows: one capsule (250 mg.) every twelve hours for two days and two capsules (500 mg.) every six hours for $7\frac{1}{2}$ days (a total of 16 g.