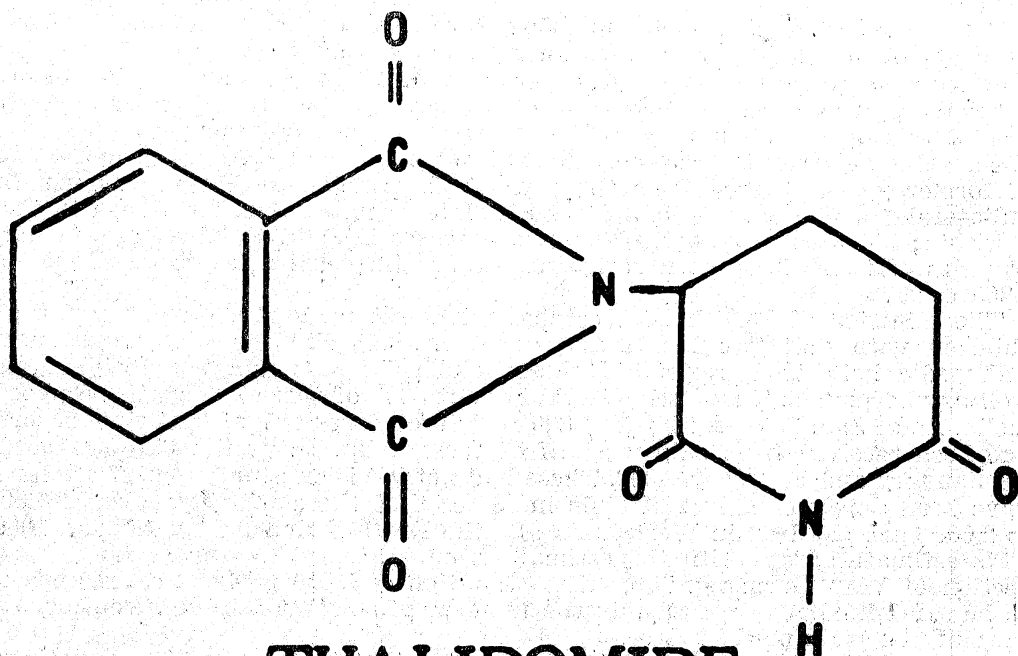


the records were not checked, the history of Contergan was recorded as probable but not proven. Dr. Weicker 10 in Bonn was collecting 100 cases of phocomelia with a history of Contergan. In March, 1962, when I was in Bonn, he had over 90 such cases.

Dr. Lenz (13) undertook a study to ascertain in how many patients who had given birth to infants with phocomelia he could obtain proof that the mother had taken Contergan during early pregnancy. He considered a case as proven only by a photostatic copy of a prescription or by a hospital record showing the date and amount of Contergan given. The difficulty in obtaining such information was great because prior to April, 1961, the drug was sold without prescription. By and large, women in the early months of pregnancy are not cared for in a hospital. Dr. Lenz, however, found that a number of women had been admitted to a hospital for some minor operation before they knew they were pregnant. Many of these patients had received a sleeping tablet while in the hospital and thereby Dr. Lenz could obtain proof that Contergan had been prescribed. In many West German hospitals sleeping tablets are given by the nurses as freely as laxatives are given in the United States.

Few of us can remember what medicine we took a year or more ago. Far less, exactly when and how much we took. In some instances, however, special events enabled the patient to remember the date or the approximate time during which she took a sleeping tablet. Travel was a common event. Many people do not sleep well when traveling. Such persons usually know if and approximately when they took sleeping tablets. One woman knew the date she took a sleeping tablet: it was the night the neighboring farm house had burned down.

Another woman recalled she had taken Contergan for 3 nights after her father-in-law had been murdered. The date was clearly imprinted on her mind. Two other incidents reported by Dr. Lenz illustrate how difficult it may be to obtain accurate information. In one instance in which the mother gave birth to a baby with phocomelia, the doctor swore the mother had not received Contergan. He



**THALIDOMIDE**  
**Alpha (N-phthalimido)**  
**glutarimide**

Fig. 7.—Formula of thalidomide.