

So, I would say it is not indicated in the ordinary upper respiratory infections.

Large doses of the drug, for example, 6 grams a day, will regularly result in well-defined injury to the bone marrow and to the blood. Now, it can be demonstrated in something like 18 out of 20 cases. In other words, if large doses of the drug are used, almost everybody, will develop well-defined effects which can be measured following the use of the drug, and here it is not a matter of sensitivity. It is a matter of dosage. The pharmacologic action of the drug is one in which the bone marrow is affected by the drug.

Senator NELSON. And, are these effects usually permanent?

Dr. DAMESHEK. These are ordinarily reversible, or self-limited. But, I must say this, that I do not like to see them. That is No. 1. And No. 2, the possibility is present that once having had a reaction of this sort on the part of the bone marrow, that individual is, therefore, sensitized to future reactions, and finally there has not yet been a study made of those individuals who have developed reactions to 6 grams a day of the drug to see whether in the future they might have developed severe drug reactions.

Senator NELSON. Is 6 grams a day a program that is frequently prescribed?

Dr. DAMESHEK. It has been rather frequently used by specialists in infectious diseases. I cannot say how frequently. But, I do know from personal observation that it has been used by specialists in infectious disease for severe infection.

Senator NELSON. Is that, in your judgment, usually or always an excessive amount to be prescribed in any event?

Dr. DAMESHEK. No. The 6 grams may be effective whereas 2 grams may not be or 1 gram may not be. But, to say it is always effective, no. I do not think you can say it is always effective in clearing up any infection.

Senator NELSON. In your judgment, would that be considered an excessive dosage in most cases?

Dr. DAMESHEK. Well, to my way of thinking, it is an excessive dosage. I would say that. But, this is my own judgment.

Unfortunately there is some evidence from case studies, that the continued use of even small doses of Chloromycetin, or in some cases even a single 5- to 7-day course of drug, may eventually lead to bone marrow damage, eventually, 6 months, a year, year and a half. Repeated courses of drug at regular or irregular intervals has, in my experience, been more regularly followed by severe reactions such as aplastic anemia than when only one course is given. This is in my own experience.

Unfortunately, in most of the cases of severe aplastic anemia, that I have seen, Chloromycetin had been given for such infections as acne, upper respiratory disorders, mild urinary infections and, in fact, indiscriminately.

Senator NELSON. These are all cases, in your judgment, where it should not have been given at all.

Dr. DAMESHEK. Well, I would say this, that in most of the cases that I have seen, in fact, in most of the cases reported in the literature of severe drug induced reactions, the drug should not have been used. It