

gested phrase "changes in color, texture and amount," as this sounds rather frightening. After all, none of those cases developed green, pink or lavender hair, I hope. Therefore, I'm inclined to believe that Murray's simple phrase "thinning of the hair" should probably be sufficient. I believe it would be well also to stress the extremely low reported incidence of these hair changes.

ROBERT T. STORMONT.

[Inter-Department Memo, Apr. 7, 1961]

To: Dr. C. A. Bunde.

From: Harold W. Werner.

Subject: MER/29—Complaint of Liver Damage, Class I. No. 70 (Memo McMaster to "Too Many People" 4/4/61).

This memo should not have gone to Mr. Long and Mr. Ritter. In addition to reporting on what was learned, the memo needed to contain a final section describing what we did and, if there was any question to what we should do, making recommendations and carrying through to obtain needed action.

We do need to arrive at a point where positive action of the proper type is taken quickly and effectively.

P.S.—In a casual conversation with Mr. Long and Mr. Ritter please explain to them what is wrong with DeGraff's thinking and conclusions.

H. W.

THE WM. S. MERRELL Co.,
Cincinnati, Ohio, June 28, 1961.

JAMES C. MELBY, M.D.,
Department of Medicine,
University of Arkansas Medical Center,
Little Rock, Ark.:

Jim, I am sorry I could not see you again after our brief discussion following presentation of your paper. Dorsey Holtkamp told me that the many rumors and comments flying around frightened you and you had decided to discontinue your large-dose experiments temporarily.

I want to comment on this, and I hope you will accept this as an opinion based on having available many more data than any one or dozen investigators could have, and also, in part, from experience in tracking down some of these rumors, such as the one Seltzer was spreading. I also hope you can interpret this as being restrained to the extent of most of all wanting to protect our investigators from getting into any trouble, using MER/29 or any of our drugs experimentally. I find in most cases that I am more conservative and more cautious than our investigators.

Up to the present, we have had no evidence which could reasonably associate MER/29 therapy with hepatic toxicity, and this includes all cases treated by the large doses, such as you have used. I feel certain that if such toxicity were inherent in the drug, it would be obviously manifested by now and would occur with a very high incidence in the 2,000 mg/day patients, if it occurred at all in the 250 mg/day patients. As I told you early in your studies, caution and close observation is necessary, because our experience in the large doses at that time was very limited. Most of the clinical data on the larger doses did not exceed 500 or 750 mg/day, with the exception of some work done at the Mayo Clinic. Now, however, since your report last December, we have had many individuals asking for drug to use specifically for adrenal suppression in doses of 2,000 mg/day, and larger. Therefore, at present, I cannot tell you the number having received such a large dose, but it must be many times the cases you have studied. We still have no evidence associating hepatic toxicity with MER/29.

After MER/29 had been on the market for some six months or more, we began receiving reports of hair loss. These were isolated and mixed with reports of hair growth and color changes, so that it was difficult at first to discern a pattern or determine if the condition were truly drug-related. We immediately started a more intensive investigation of all complaints, using a definite form for obtaining uniform data, and soon concluded that, at least in some of the cases, the hair loss was related to MER/29 therapy. The higher incidence found by the Mayo Clinic group using larger doses confirmed this. However, their data were not made available to us until March 20 of this year. We immediately changed our literature to include this under side effects.