

Subdural effusions, often associated with sequelae, were evenly distributed between the two therapeutic groups, and the excess rate of neurological residua in the triple therapy group could not be attributed to this complication. A preliminary analysis of serial cerebrospinal fluid examinations failed to show any significant differences in the rates of return to normal in the two groups.

The mean hospital stay for both treatment groups was 19 days, with median stays of 16 and 17 days for those in the ampicillin and triple drugs groups, respectively. The prolonged hospital stays of all patients reflect the adherence to a rather stringent set of clinical criteria for the discontinuation of treatment (15).

In contrast to our earlier study (15), the complications of drug therapy were not significantly different in the two treatment groups. The rather high frequencies of rash and phlebitis in each treatment group are probably secondary to the large amounts of ampicillin given intravenously.

Times of death. Analysis of the deaths occurring in each group, by time after treatment was begun, revealed a different distribution in the single-drug group (Table 3). Two-thirds of the deaths (4 of 6) in the ampicillin group occurred in the first 48 hr, whereas only 30% (4 of 13) of the deaths in the triple therapy group occurred during the first 2 days. The proportion of early deaths to the total numbers of patients in each group was similar, i.e., 4 of 140 (2.9%) on ampicillin and 4 of 124 (3.3%) on the triple therapy.

TABLE 1.—FREQUENCY OF DEATH AND SEVERE NEUROLOGICAL RESIDUA IN PATIENTS WITH ACUTE BACTERIAL MENINGITIS BY TREATMENT GROUP¹

Treatment regimen assigned	Results of treatment								Total number of patients
	Recovered, no residua		Recovered with residua		Died		Combined fatality and residua		
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Ampicillin.....	123	87.9	11	7.8	6	4.3	17	12.1	140
Triple.....	96	77.4	15	12.1	13	10.5	28	22.6	124
Total.....	219	83.0	26	9.8	19	7.2	45	17.0	264

¹ Drug dosages, patients excluded, and type of residua are explained in text.

TABLE 2.—DISTRIBUTION OF COMPLICATIONS OF DISEASE AND RESPONSE TO THERAPY BY TREATMENT GROUP

Problems observed	Treatment regimen			
	Ampicillin		Triple	
	Cases	Percent	Cases	Percent
Persistent fever (100 F[R]>7 days).....	27	20.0	23	21.6
Subdural effusion.....	6	4.5	6	5.4
Prolonged hospital stay (≥19 days).....	47	35.0	36	32.2
Complications of therapy (rash, eosinophilia, phlebitis, etc.).....	38	27.6	30	27.0
Hematological.....	0	0	3	2.7

TABLE 3.—TIME OF DEATH AFTER INITIATION OF THERAPY BY TREATMENT GROUPS IN 2 SEPARATE SERIES OF PATIENTS WITH BACTERIAL MENINGITIS

Source of data	Single drug				Combination of drugs			
	Death		All deaths	Total cases	Death		All deaths	Total cases
	≥48 hr.	>48 hr.			≥48 hr.	>48 hr.		
Lepper and Dowling (11).....	9	4	13	43	3	8	11	14
Percent.....	69	31	100	-----	27.2	72.8	100	-----
Present report.....	4	2	6	140	4	9	13	124
Percent.....	66.7	33.3	100	-----	30.8	69.2	100	-----