

Abnormal symptoms, signs, and laboratory tests during treatment with phenothiazine derivatives

Complications were neither frequent nor severe in 599 newly admitted schizophrenic patients treated for 12 weeks with chlorpromazine, triflupromazine, mepazine, prochlorperazine, perphenazine, and phenobarbital. Twelve patients were dropped from treatment because of adverse symptoms or signs, 5 because of hematologic abnormalities, and 4 because of deviant hepatic tests.

Many abnormal symptoms and signs generally thought to be associated with phenothiazine drug therapy also occurred during treatment with phenobarbital. Leucopenia was not significantly more frequent from phenothiazines than from phenobarbital.

No significant differences in abnormal hepatic tests were noted between the 6 agents.

Most abnormal tests were isolated and sporadic. No frank case of intrahepatic obstructive jaundice was observed. Changes in body temperature, pulse rate, and blood pressure were uncommon, with no significant differences in frequency between the drug regimens.

Not all abnormalities in symptoms, signs, and laboratory tests which occurred during treatment can be attributed to it. At least some must be spontaneous fluctuations in the population studied.

Leo E. Hollister, M.D. Palo Alto, Calif.

Medical Service, Veterans Administration Hospital

Eugene M. Caffey, Jr., M.D., and C. James Klett, Ph.D. Perry Point, Md.

Staff Psychiatrist, Veterans Administration Hospital, and

Assistant Chief, Veterans Administration Central Neuropsychiatric Research Laboratory

Wide experience with the phenothiazine derivatives in clinical use has delineated the prevalence of undesirable effects or abnormal laboratory tests, as they are studied under varied conditions. A controlled study by the Veterans Administration suggests that the incidence of reac-

tions and abnormal laboratory findings may be smaller than is generally believed, and these must be evaluated against a background of behavioral, hematologic, hepatic, and autonomic nervous system variability inherent in a schizophrenic population.

Six drugs (chlorpromazine, triflupromazine, mepazine, prochlorperazine, perphenazine, and phenobarbital) were given for a 12 week period to 599 newly admitted

Staff from 35 hospitals participating in Project No. 3, Veterans Administration Cooperative Studies in Chemotherapy in Psychiatry, collected the data used for this study.