

Correspondence

"THE EFFECT OF MERCURY SALICYLATE ON THE WASSERMANN REACTION"

To the Editor:—I have read with much interest Dr. Herman Goodman's article on "The Effect of Mercury Salicylate on the Wassermann Reaction," in the August number of the *Archives of Dermatology and Syphilology*. I thought all syphilologists were past that milepost of knowledge which marks the use of liquid petrolatum as a vehicle for intramuscular injections. It has repeatedly been shown that the material is not absorbed, and that about all the physician gets is a paraffinoma for his pains.

I think Dr. Goodman also erred in the matter of dosage. Few of us would expect to secure permanently beneficial results following one grain doses of mercury salicylate, injected at intervals of one week, even if an absorbable medium were used.

I have been employing mercury salicylate, in an olive oil and lanolin emulsion, for more than twelve years, and while I occasionally branch off and try some other highly recommended preparation, I have invariably returned to the old standby, for I am convinced that when properly employed it is one of our most potent and reliable remedies in combating syphilis.

RICHARD L. SUTTON, M.D., Kansas City, Mo.

"THE EFFECT OF MERCURY SALICYLATE ON THE WASSERMANN REACTION"

To the Editor:—Although Dr. Sutton may very properly criticize the method of using mercury salicylate described in my article, "The Effect of Mercury Salicylate on the Wassermann Reaction," on the ground that, in his opinion, the dosage and vehicle are objectional, it is hardly accurate to suggest that the method is antiquated and not in use by modern syphilographers.

As to the vehicle: Liquid petrolatum is a menstruum which has been and is being largely used. Stellwagon, Hazen, Ormsby—to take the first illustrations that come to hand—all give liquid petrolatum or its equivalents as a vehicle for mercury salicylate. The "Army Manual of Treatment of Venereal Diseases" gives the same menstruum, as does the Public Health Service edition of that manual.

As to dosage: Perhaps no one in this country or elsewhere has given so much attention to the safe dosage of mercury as have Schamberg and his coexperimenters of the staff of the Dermatological Research Laboratories. In a pamphlet on the treatment of syphilis just issued from these laboratories the following statement on this subject appears: ". . . the insoluble compounds, if used at all, should be limited to one grain doses . . ." Elsewhere the same authors say: ". . . A word of caution must be sounded for the insoluble mercurials; administered as they usually are, once a week, they are sure to accumulate in the body . . ."

HERMAN GOODMAN, M.D., New York.