

Medical information service : a new tranquillising sedative in dermatology.

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C I B A

Medical
Information
Service

A new tranquillising sedative in dermatology

The widespread use of Serpasil (reserpine, the active alkaloid from Rauwolfia) in the treatment of anxiety states has confirmed its effectiveness in relaxing mental tension without dulling the mental faculties. The calming influence is quite different from barbiturate sedation and is usually associated with a feeling of relaxed well-being.

The application of this unique sedative action of Rauwolfia in dermatology has in the last few months been the subject of several publications*. There is now clear evidence that Serpasil provides an ideal form of sedation for those patients in whom a skin disorder is associated with a psychogenic factor. Of particular interest are the good results reported in the treatment of psoriasis. The successful use of Serpasil in this condition is due to its effectiveness in preventing emotional upsets which would bring about an exacerbation of the skin lesions. The clinical response is not dramatic and though pruritus may be relieved promptly and the patient feels better and is less worried, objective improvement is usually only apparent after several weeks' treatment.

A very important advantage with Serpasil therapy is the virtual absence of significant side effects. In a few cases, drowsiness, nasal congestion, and weight increase due to increased appetite may occur. Such effects often disappear spontaneously or on reduced dosage but hardly ever justify cessation of treatment.

* For references please see overleaf.

Dosage :—The average dosage employed in the investigations has been 0.25 mg. three or four times daily. Higher doses may be used in appropriate cases and it will usually be found that a much lower dose will be adequate for maintenance.

Should you wish to give Serpasil a trial please return the enclosed reply card.

- References* :— Canad. med. Ass. J. (1954) 71, 73.
 *Ann. N.Y. Acad. Sci. (1955) 61, 230.
 *ibid. (1955) 72, 490.
 A.M.A. Arch. Derm. Syph. (1954) 70, 713.
 *L'Union Med. Canada (1955) 84, 672.
 Brit. med. J. (1955) 1, 1428.

*Abstracts of the above papers are available on request.

'Serpasil' is registered trade mark.

The Medical Department

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