

Correspondence

Long-term administration of beta adrenergic agents

To the Editor:

In the February, 1979, issue of THE JOURNAL OF ALLERGY AND CLINICAL IMMUNOLOGY (63:74), Dr. J. W. Jenne discussed long-term administration of beta adrenergic agents. In the third paragraph he quotes from a paper by Paterson, Courtney-Evans, and Prime (Br J Dis Chest, 1971) stating that "abrupt cessation of the salbutamol drip was followed by 'rebound bronchoconstriction' in 4 out of 15 patients. Two of these failed to respond to recommencement of salbutamol at high doses, but dramatically responded to intravenous aminophylline."

If you refer to the original article by Paterson et al., p.28, you will read that the patients were not treated with salbutamol; rather, "all four patients were treated with isoprenaline" (emphasis mine). Two of these four patients responded to intravenous salbutamol, needing 2.2 $\mu\text{g}/\text{min}$ to achieve pre-isoprenaline FEV₁ and 10.8 $\mu\text{g}/\text{min}$ to achieve the FEV₁ obtained initially with isoprenaline. Two patients responded to intravenous aminophylline—one after salbutamol 2.2 $\mu\text{g}/\text{min}$ was successful.

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Reply

To the Editor:

The error is mine and regretable. The correction is important, particularly since a weak alpha component of isoproterenol might be a factor in rebound bronchoconstriction under these circumstances.

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Parietaria officinalis L. allergy

To the Editor:

On a recent visit (April 13-14, 1979) to Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco, we were surprised to observe a great number of *Parietaria officinalis* L., or wall pellitory, blossoming around the port.

The plant (Fig. 1) belongs to the Urticaceae family¹⁻³ and plays an important role in the south of France where it ranks just after the grasses in the frequency of accidents observed. Accidents were observed in Italy, Spain, Greece, Lebanon, Turkey, Algeria, and Tunisia. These accidents



FIG. 1. *Parietaria officinalis* L. gathered on April 14, 1979, at Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco. It was observed by J. J. Rousseau in the eighteenth century that when the flower is mature it "explodes," shedding pollen grains.

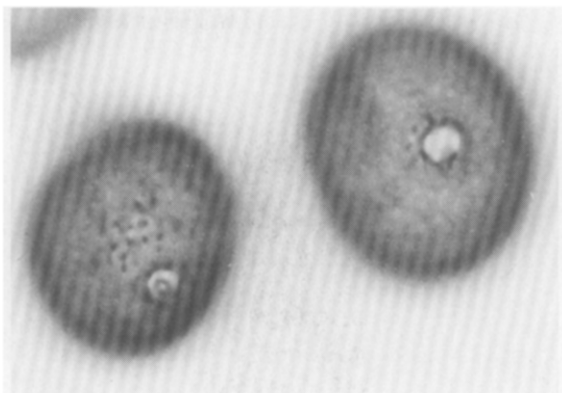


FIG. 2. Pollen grains (triporate with scabrous exine). Main diameters, 14.5 μ $\times$ 16.5 μ .

consist always in rhinitis and conjunctivitis but also often in asthma (69% in our own experience). The pollinating season is very long, in the south of France extending from the beginning of April to the beginning of October with a drop during the very dry months.

The pollen grains (Fig. 2) are spheroidal, triporate, with scabrous exine, and small spines appearing only on scanning views. The mean diameters are 14.5 μ (polar) and 16.5 μ (equatorial). The plant is wind pollinated but with short-range dissemination. We brought back a small sample of pollen from San Francisco; two French patients, known to be allergic to *Parietaria*, elicited the same strong immediate reaction as with our usual tests. Patients allergic to *Parietaria officinalis* L. are not sensitive to nettles, which also belong to the family Urticaceae.

It would be interesting to know from California allergists if accidents due to *Parietaria* are observed since, first we do

not know if the plant is frequent in California or confined to surroundings of Fisherman's Wharf and, second, the clinical role of this plant depends upon dampness of the atmosphere. For instance, in Switzerland, Belgium, or north of the River Loire in France, there are many specimens of *Parietaria*, but no accidents.

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2. Panzani R: L'asthme pollinique à la pariétaire. Presse Med 64:908, 1956.

3. Serafini V: Studies on hay fever (with special regard to pollinosis due to *Parietaria officinalis*). Acta Allergol 11:3, 1957.

Serum albumin in insect venom

To the Editor:

As insect venom has become available for use by private physicians, it may be timely to remind that the diluent used does contain serum albumin. Therefore, it behooves the physician to inquire whether there may be a religious preference, as in members of the Jehovah's Witness sect, to avoid the use of human blood products.

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