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PRECIPITINS, REAGINS AND BLOCKING ANTIBODIES¹

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Precipitins, reagins and blocking antibodies are all serum antibodies and it is my task today to discuss some of the properties of these different antibodies where they concern allergists. In particular, this means attempting to show in what way reagins are different from other serum antibodies, what is the present state of our knowledge with regard to their physical properties, with regard to measuring them by *in-vitro* or animal tests, and with regard to characterizing them immuno-chemically.

Precipitins are the well investigated type of antibodies with which immunologists have been familiar for a long time; as the name implies, a precipitate is formed when a solution of precipitating antibodies (or precipitins) is added in the appropriate proportion to a solution of the appropriate antigen. Based on this numerous methods have been evolved for estimating precipitins. Precipitins are formed in all types of mammals including man. Large amounts of precipitins can often be met with in the sera of mould allergic subjects. Their presence usually indicates the existence of a fungal infection, but is *not* concerned with the immediate type hypersensitivity of the asthma-hay fever type, i. e. they are *not* the cause of the immediate type histamine-like skin responses familiar to the allergist. Precipitins are not involved in the *Prausnitz-Kuestner* transfer tests (1921). They are however responsible for the *Arthus* type reaction of the rabbit and for what has become

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