LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

Regarding the article 'Effect of an ointment containing boric acid, zinc oxide, starch and petrolatum on psoriasis'

The aim of the study was to see whether a Deri-Sal-like ointment was more effective than petroleum alone. I would like to query why the authors used a concentration of boracic acid of 0.3%.

Correspondence I have had from Rudduck Australia Pty Ltd (Cheltenham North, Vic, Australia), dated 29 October 1990, indicates that Deri-Sal contains 1.5% boracic acid (as well as zinc oxide 3%). Does this mean that the present Deri-Sal preparation has been changed to one containing five-fold less boracic acid than previously?

Obviously, a study using one-fifth the concentration of boracic would not be useful in determining how effective the stronger preparation was.

REFERENCE

KJ Dallimore
Dermatologist
Mt Lawley, Western Australia
Australia

OBITUARY

Lorna Margaret Archibald

BSc (Qld), MSc (Qld), MB, BS (Qld), DDM (Syd), FACD, Life Member, AMA

Dr Archibald was born in 1914 and died early in 1998. After receiving a BSc and then an MSc from the University of Queensland, she went on to study medicine and acquired the MB, BS in 1942. In 1949, she gained the DDM from the University of Sydney, at the same time as another well-known Queensland Dermatologist, Dr Otto Nothling. Dr Archibald attended the Dermatology Outpatients department of the Brisbane Hospital (now Royal Brisbane Hospital) as a postgraduate student and was appointed to that hospital and to the Children's Hospital (now Royal Children's Hospital) as a junior dermatologist. When she returned from Sydney in 1949, she relinquished her position at the Children's Hospital in favour of Dr Nothling.

She was a foundation member of the Dermatological Association of Australia (DAA) and was the President of the DAA when it was replaced by the Australasian College of Dermatologists. At the Brisbane Hospital, Dr Archibald was a junior dermatologist when Dr Bruce Barrack, followed by Dr Ambrose Foote, were the senior dermatologists. She retired from the hospital in 1975.

Dr Archibald was an astute clinician and an excellent teacher for undergraduate and postgraduate students. From 1951 and 1975, she was a lecturer in dermatology at the Department of Medicine, University of Queensland.

Graeme Beardmore

Reply

Dear Editor,

We thank Kevin Dallimore for his letter stating that the concentration of boracic acid in Deri-Sal is 1.5% rather than 0.3%, as stated in our article. Unfortunately, this error was not picked up during the study or prior to publication. In our article we concluded that a Deri-Sal-like ointment was not statistically better when compared with placebo, which is still valid, even though the concentrations were not the same as Deri-Sal. To confirm whether Deri-Sal ointment is more effective than placebo, a further study would need to be undertaken.

S Limaye
W Weightman
Adelaide, South Australia
Australia