'Tear Gas' for the Diagnosis of Diabetic Autonomic Neuropathy?

Dear Sir,

The increasing number of articles on diabetic neuropathy in *Diabetologia* has stimulated our interest in enlarging the diagnostic repertoire for autonomic neuropathy. There are only a few standard tests to evaluate impaired autonomic functions.

Faerman et al. have recently reported new data on diabetic anhidrosis [1], using a sweating test published by a Russian author nearly 50 years ago [2]. From our recent experience with this method, we wish to give a warning not to use the modified Faerman-Minor-Mixture to test the ability of a patient to produce sweat. After a heating procedure to produce sweating (external warmth plus hot tea), it is suggested that a mixture of iodine, acetone and alcohol be applied to the skin area to be investigated, which is then powdered with starch. In our experience, this mixture is not a good marker for the sweating areas, but instead has a major effect on another source of watery body fluid, namely the production of tears. Chemically, by mixing iodine and acetone, a kind of 'tear gas' is produced.

We would therefore recommend the original Minor-Mixture, namely 15 g of elementary iodine, 100 g Rhizinus-oil and 900 g of 90% alcohol (*Spiritus Vini*). This mixture gives satisfactory results 'without tears'!

Yours sincerely,

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References

1. Faerman I, Faccio E, Calb I, Razumny J, Franco M, Dominguez A, Podesta HA (1982) Autonomic neuropathy in the skin: a histological study of the sympathetic nerve fibres in diabetic anhidrosis. *Diabetologia* 22: 96–99
2. Minor V (1927) Ein neues Verfahren zu den klinischen Untersuchungen der Schweissabsonderung. *Dtsch Z Nervenheilkd* 101: 302–308

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Errata

Diabetologia, volume 22, number 6 (June)/1982, pages 399–411: Review Article by Zimmet "Type 2 (Non-Insulin-Dependent) Diabetes – An Epidemiological Overview"

Reference 59 should read:

Serjeantson SW, Ryan DP, Ram P, Zimmet P (1981) HLA and non-insulin dependent diabetes in Fiji Indians. *Med J Aust* 1: 462–463

Diabetologia, volume 23, number 1 (July)/1982, pages 28–33: Paper by Kraemer, Chen, Cheung and Reaven "Are the Binding and Degradation of Low Density Lipoprotein Altered in Type 2 (Non-Insulin-Dependent) Diabetes Mellitus?"

Unfortunately, Table 2 was accidentally omitted. The data can be obtained from the authors on request.