LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

2004, 7th Avenue South
Lethbridge, Alta
October 7, 1957

The Editor
Canadian Anaesthetists' Society Journal
170 St. George St
Toronto, 5

DEAR SIR.

Drs. Dobkin and Wyant reporting in the July number of your JOURNAL on the results of experiments on eight volunteers with intravenous anaesthetics state: "Hexobarbital The mean period of apnoea with this drug was seven seconds with the same mean dose of 517 mg./M² There was virtually no depression of the respiration or the metabolic rate." They go on to say "On the whole, hexobarbital had far less effect on either respiration or haemodynamics than thiamylal for the corresponding state." And later on they write: "All the drugs significantly depressed oxygen consumption except hexobarbital", and finally: "Venous pressure was also reduced by all drugs by at least 15 per cent with the least changes observed with hexobarbital and buthalitone"

These observations all tend to confirm my own opinion (1) and to mention a few others, Morley, Blair Gould and Mushin (2,3,4,5), however, Drs Wyant, Dobkin and Aasheim writing in the *British Journal of Anaesthesia* two months earlier (May, 1957) about five of these seven experiments with hexobarbital published in your JOURNAL state. "Because of its more detrimental effects, especially on respiration, hexobarbitone cannot be recommended"

These two publications by the same authors about the same experiments are difficult to assess unless "hexobarbitone" is a misprint for some other drug. If not it would be interesting to know what the changes in the last two experiments were that were of such magnitude that they altered the conclusions drawn from the previous five?

Yours truly,

J. SHEGOG RUDELL, M.A., M.D., D.A., F.F.A.R.C.S

REFERENCES

- 1 RUDELL, J S Brit M J 55: 972.
- 2 MORLEY, A H Brit M. J. 55: 1353
- 3 BLAIR GOULD, R Brit. M. J., 56: 48
- 4 MUSHIN, W W Anaesthesia 9: 234 (1954)
- 5 BLAIR GOULD, R Anaesthesia, 10. 91 (1955).

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October 23, 1957

The Editor
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SIR

We want to thank you for sending us Dr. Ruddell's letter and allowing us to reply

Dr. Ruddell objects to our statement in the *British Journal of Anaesthesia* (May, 1957) which seems to be contradictory to those made in this JOURNAL. Our graphs on pages 206 and 207 of the paper in the *British Journal of Anaesthesia* show very clearly that hexobarbital indeed compared favourably with the other agents studied as far as average tidal volumes and minute volumes are concerned. However, it should be noted that the wavy lines for hexobarbitone indicate marked irregularity of breathing patterns which causes difficulty in computing averages. If Dr. Ruddell will turn to page 198 of the same paper, he will read that there was crowing and periodic respiration, in addition to spontaneous often jerky, movements of the extremities. Thus on the whole, hexobarbital as an anaesthetic agent was inferior to both thiopental and thiamylal.

We must apologize for not having made this point clear, and probably our statement "especially on respiration" should have been more specific to avoid misunderstandings.

Yours faithfully,

GORDON M. WYANT, F.F.A.R.C.S.
ALLEN B. DOBKIN, M.D.