storage of chemical products and increased publicity of the potential dangers of chemical agents. Legislation in Canada and the United States will shortly make safety containers mandatory for drugs and household products. 1, 2

In November 1969 the Liverpool Regional Hospital Board agreed that the Palm-N-Turn container should be introduced into the region and that this programme should start in Birkenhead. It is hoped that child-resistant containers will be adopted in other areas and that their use may be made compulsory throughout the country as soon as possible. 3

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REFERENCES

War Surgery in Nigeria

Sir,—I was very interested in the article by Mr. G. W. Odling-Smee (6 June, p. 592), particularly noting his views on major limb wounds in which fractures are combined with soft tissue injuries. I hope his advocacy of the use of immediate internal fixation by closed methods, if possible, is not taken at its face value without full reference to the paper by Dudley et al. 1 which he quotes. Too often one sees these injuries closed under tension or by unsafe local flaps and encased in plaster for six weeks with disastrous results. If internal fixation is to be used particularly when there is a skin defect there must be available “a team seized with the urgency of skin cover.” Trueta's work 2 and that of his predecessors and followers has frequently been mis-read or only half read by those responsible for the care of compound injuries, and the application of the principle of delayed primary skin cover too often ignored in the past, in war and peace. 3

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REFERENCES

Ergotamine Tartrate in Migraine

Sir,—I am surprised that Dr. D. S. Freestone (6 June, p. 599) should be puzzled by the ineffectiveness of ergotamine tartrate shown by Dr. W. E. Waters (9 May, p. 325). The wonder is that the investigation, using a homeopathic dose instead of a therapeutic dose, was ever undertaken.

For many years I, like Dr. Waters, followed the usage of textbooks and gave a dose of 1 or 2 mg. followed by 1 mg. half hourly. I was quite convinced that ergotamine tartrate was a drug of little value, except in so far as there was no other more effective drug in tablet form unless one happened to have discovered that particular patient responded to some less conventional treatment, such as 400 mg. of sodium amylate.

One day I chanced to pick up a manual 1 in which I read that the American usage is to give 5 mg. initially followed by 2 mg. half hourly, if necessary up to the usual maximum dose of 10 mg. in a day. I now find that a single dose of 5 mg. is all that is needed to abort an attack of migraine in almost any patient unless vomiting necessitates an injection.—I am, etc.,

D. T. FITZGERALD,
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REFERENCES

Nifuratel for Trichomanial Vaginitis

Sir,—Drs. B. A. Evans and R. D. Catterall (9 May, p. 335) quote an early study by Dr. J. Delon and myself on nifuratel 1 at the obstetrics and gynaecology clinic of the University of Berne. In further trials on 485 patients 2 I was able to compare the therapeutic activity of nifuratel (Malgimol; in Switzerland Macmimiro) with that of metronidazole (Flagyl), referring also to my previous experiments with the latter product. 3

The conclusions I came to are quite different from those reached by Drs. Evans and Catterall. In fact, in 1965-6, I observed that the cure rate attained by metronidazole was about 68%, and that by nifuratel about 80%.

In my experience, the activity of nifuratel in bacterial and mycotic infections was satisfactory in cases of mixed aetiology and in preventing mycotic superinfections, which often occur after treatment with metronidazole.—I am, etc.,

M. ARNOLD,
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REFERENCE
3 Arnold, M., and Berger, M., Gynaecologia, 1961, 182, 238.

Pre-ulcerative Buruli Lesions

Sir,—In our recent paper on “Clinical Features and Treatment of Pre-ulcerative Buruli Lesions” (16 May, p. 390) it was not made clear that the five cases described were investigated bacteriologically, and that Mycobacterium ulcerans was isolated from the excised lesions in each case. We have commented previously on bacteriological findings in lesions of different histological types. 1 —I am, etc.,

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REFERENCES
1 Uganda Buruli Group, Lancet, 1969, 1, 111.

Sleep and Drug Overdose

Sir,—For some years I have followed Dr. Ian Oswald's work on sleep and related problems with interest and admiration so it is with some dismay that I read the article on late brain recovery processes after drug overdose (9 May, p. 318).

It may be that raised paradoxical (R.E.M.) sleep rebound indicates protracted turnover of proteins in the cerebrum, but it occurs in a variety of conditions—amphetamine withdrawal, barbiturate withdrawal, overdosage with tricyclic drugs, and after “E.C.T. overdosage.” Dr. I. Haider and Dr. Oswald show that in Case 1 after an overdose of Mandrax R.E.M. sleep returned to normal according to their chart in 31 days, but in Case 4 after two episodes of overdosage with nitrazepam the R.E.M. remained abnormal for 33 days and more than 42 days.

In their third last paragraph they say that “nitrazepam is to be preferred to its contemporary rivals” because of its safety, but then go on to make a statement that indicates that co-ordination, emotional stability, and good judgement need not be

Italo SAGONE.

REFERENCES
1 Sugone, I., Minerva Ginecologica, 1965, 17, 654.