Chapter 10

Some confirming reports

In the two years that have passed since the 1957 Karlsruhe Therapy Congress, news of the procaine therapy has spread around the globe. Confirmation of the effectiveness of procaine as a treatment for many of the diseases of old age has begun to accumulate. More and more of the original skeptics have begun their own clinical trials of this therapy, and reports of their work appear in increasing number.

Switzerland

In November, 1957, a group of Swiss gerontologists—Gassman, Jacquerod, Laepple and Schaefer—reported on their first clinical trials as follows:

"The procaine treatment introduced by Aslan was applied in 28 cases; 22 of the patients presented diffuse or localized lesions of the central nervous system: hemiplegia (paralysis), hemiparesis (muscle weakness), spasmodic ataxia (spastic disturbance of muscle coordination), postapoplectic (following a stroke) or arteriosclerotic dementia. Each
patient received three 100 mg intramuscular injections a week (5 cc of the 2 per cent solution) in series of 12 injections, separated by ten-day intervals. . . . We obtained lasting results in 25 per cent of the cases, such as improvement of the subjective state, buoyancy of the psychical tonus, slight euphoria, sometimes a better physical tonus in walking and in voluntary motility, and disappearance of sphincteral incontinence."

**France**

In the *Revue Française de Gérontologie* (April, 1959) Professor H. Portias of Paris, one of Prof. Aslan's early antagonists, reported on his experience with 86 aged patients whom he treated with procaine. Not being able to use placebos, he still endeavored to avoid the possibility of purely psychotherapeutical effects by telling the patients of his inexperience with the method and of his skepticism as to its efficacy.

Professor Portias' patients suffered from the usual signs of old age: arterio- and venosclerosis, chronic cough, wrinkled skin, rheumatism, and various arthritic conditions. He subjected them all to five months of procaine injections, at the customary rate of three per week; beneficial effects, except in the less severe cases of senility, could hardly be expected in so short a period. Yet in more than half of the patients the results were either "very good" (15 cases) or they were "improved" (30 cases). Twenty patients felt a bit better, 21 showed