

and other life-saving drugs, with suitable sterile syringes should always be at hand. The value of penicillinase in anaphylactic reactions has not yet been established but warrants further investigation: some patients, however, may show anaphylaxis to this enzyme itself.

Sensitivity to penicillin, already far from rare, is likely to become more widespread. Serious allergic reactions must be anticipated, especially in syphilitic patients and those treated repeatedly for gonorrhoea. In the USA the fatality rate has dropped since there was a greater awareness of the seriousness of anaphylaxis; in 1953/57 the fatality rate was 9.1 per cent. compared with 28 per cent. in an earlier survey (Welch, Lewis, Weinstein, and Boeckman, 1958). Greater awareness of the danger, close interrogation of the patient before each treatment, and

the immediate availability of the "anaphylactic kit" will combine to avoid preventable fatalities. Otherwise, there is real danger that the undoubted blessings of penicillin will be lost and that, in respect of syphilis (and gonorrhoea), the cure may once again prove almost as dangerous as the disease.

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## INTERNATIONAL UNION AGAINST THE VENEREAL DISEASES AND THE TREPONEMATOSES

The proceedings of the General Assembly of the International Union Against the Venereal Diseases and the Treponematoses, held in London during October, 1959, will be published in the *British Journal of Venereal Diseases* (issues of March and June, 1960). The papers will be printed in English but will be accompanied by summaries in French.

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