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INOCULATIONS AGAINST CUTANEOUS LEISHMANIASIS

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The incidence of cutaneous leishmaniasis is especially high in Central Asia and in certain parts of the Transcaucasus. In some regions it assumes epidemic proportions.

Systematic study of cutaneous leishmaniasis in the Soviet period was begun in Merva by Khlodukin and was continued by I. I. Gitel'zon who, in 1933, wrote a monograph in which he reviewed all prior data on this infection and included the latest developments on it.

During the past decade considerable progress was made in the study of the treatment, immunity, and methods of controlling cutaneous leishmaniasis. The results of successful scientific research conducted by Kozhevnikov, Dobrotvorskaya, and Latyshev, scientific associates at the Turkmen Scientific Research [sic] Dermato-Venerological Institute, were published in a monograph entitled, Research on Cutaneous Leishmaniasis.

The problem of acquired immunity against cutaneous leishmaniasis was investigated by I. I. Gitel'zon in 1929, and in 1930 by Tikhomirov who used live cultures of leishmaniasis to inoculate 54 people. The refinements of Tikhomirov's method were subsequently worked out by Lavrov, Dybovskaya, and Sokolova at the Turkmen Dermato-Venerological Institute.

Numerous tests conducted at this institute revealed that inoculation against this infection on covered portions of the skin (shoulder and hip), resulted in a mild form of the infection and served the essential purpose of preventing the spread of ulcers to the face and other uncovered portions of the skin.

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The production of the leishmaniasis vaccine was far below the amount required for large-scale inoculation of the population against this infection, and this shortage was further accentuated by the influx of large numbers of people in connection with the reconstruction of Ashkhabad [probably following the earthquake in 1948], and the construction of the Main Turkmen Canal. Therefore, at present the Turkmen Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology is attempting to improve the method of preparing a live leishmaniasis vaccine on a large scale.

Kuznetsova, co-author of this article, studied and worked out a method for preparing this vaccine in large quantities, and in a form capable of being shipped without affecting its inoculative properties. Vaccines against cutaneous leishmaniasis, prepared by Kuznetsova, are being tested on a large scale by the Turkmen Dermato-Venerological Institute. The results will be applied to general inoculations.

Inoculations made in 1950 with the vaccine developed by the Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology showed this vaccine to be very effective; no serious skin damage at inoculated areas resulted.

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