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SOME NEW REMEDIES IN THE LOCAL TREATMENT OF SKIN DISEASES.

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At the last meeting of the State Medical Society I called attention to "Some important topical remedies, and their use in the treatment of skin diseases." Since that time I have been enabled to make further practical observations upon some additional preparations, which I bring forward in this paper.

Oleic Iodoform, the first medicinal remedy that I shall consider, is prepared by dissolving about twenty-four grains of iodoform in oleic acid. The preparation thus formed is a yellow oily liquid, with a very slight odor of the iodoform. The strength of the solution should be 5 per cent., or about twenty-four grains of the iodoform to the ounce of oleic acid. Should the amount of the iodoform be increased it will recrystallize from its warm solution, and will not add any additional therapeutic action to the remedy. As far as I have been able to learn I believe that I have been the first to use these two preparations in combination. I have had this oleic iodoform prepared in the above manner by Dr. L. Wolff, of Philadelphia, and have used it for some time with both marked and beneficial results. It is an exceedingly valuable remedy, and possesses many advantages over iodoform dissolved in either lard, alcohol, ether, chloroform, or the fixed and volatile oils. The great advantages that this combination has over other iodoform preparations are as follows:—

First, it never becomes rancid, like ointments, neither will it evaporate like spirits and ethereal combinations of iodoform.

Secondly, the oleic acid removes very much the disagreeable smell of the iodoform.

Thirdly, the oleic acid will not in any way destroy the identity of the iodoform, but will enhance its value by the combination. Abundant therapeutic experiment has already shown that the local

action of iodoform has been to heal and soothe the parts upon which it is applied. The addition of the oleic acid with its active solvent power, and its ability to penetrate deeply and rapidly into animal textures, will render the iodoform far more active and effective in many skin diseases.

Fourthly, oleic iodoform not only possesses great penetrating and absorbing power, which manifests itself in prompt remedial action, but it is also one of the most economical and cleanly preparations that can be applied to the skin. It is an economical preparation, as a very few drops suffice for its remedial action, and one should always recollect this fact, and should never prescribe more than one or two drachms at one time. It is also remarkable as a cleanly agent, for, by its rapid absorption into the tissues, it will not stain the linen as most ointments do.

Oleic iodoform should not be rubbed in like ordinary spirits, liniments or ointments, but should be lightly brushed over the surface with a camel's-hair-brush.

Oleic iodoform, applied to the unbroken skin, produces slight stimulation, but when used upon ulcers and abrasions of the mucous membrane it acts as a decided astringent. If brought in contact with discharging surfaces, and luxuriant granulations, it will check all secretion by contracting the vessels, condense the tissue, coat over the parts by precipitating the albumen, and so protect them from the injurious action of the air. This combined stimulant and astringent action of this preparation renders it a useful application in a variety of skin affections.

In scrofulous disease of the skin it is a most valuable adjunct in the treatment. When the glands are involved, and the oleic iodoform is applied over the surface, the stimulating and penetrating action of the combination assists rapidly in reducing them to their normal size. In another class of strumous subjects, in which the lymphatic glands suppurate, break down, and form scrofulous ulcers, which give exit to unhealthy and fetid pus, the application of the oleic iodoform assists in checking the formation of the pus, acts as a disinfectant by destroying all the odor, speedily reduces the abnormal state, and largely adds to the cure of the disease.

Oleic iodoform is also valuable in stimulating granulation and the hardened edges of chronic ulcers of the limbs and back, and likewise restrains and deodorizes the discharges of the part. In boils and carbuncles, the free application of the oleic iodoform, before suppuration sets in, will lessen the pain, and at times will cause them to abort. After an incision has been made in a car-

buncle the use of the oleic iodoform will overcome any noxious odor from the part, and will hasten the process of repair.

In psoriasis of the head, where one finds the scalp covered with a good crop of hair the best application that can be used is oleic iodoform, which acts effectually in connection with the proper internal remedies. By rubbing this preparation of oleic iodoform thoroughly into the scaly patches of psoriasis of the scalp it is quickly absorbed, and is far preferable to the various ointments which largely remain on or in the hair, and are either brushed off on the covering of the head or drop down on the neck.

Oleic iodoform can also be used with great benefit in functional diseases of the sweat glands. Thus I have employed it with decided advantage in the profuse secretion of sweat from the axillæ, the palms of the hands, the genito-crural folds, the fundament, and the soles of the feet. Again, its use in that disease in which the odor of the perspiration of the parts just named becomes offensive, both to the patient and those around, not only causes the odor to disappear, but often arrests the diseased condition itself.

In addition to the above observation, I have also found that a combination of the oleate of mercury with iodoform to be of very great advantage, especially in the local treatment of syphilitic affections of the skin. This combination can be made by adding about twenty-four grains of *iodoform* to the ounce of oleate of mercury, which gives a yellowish liquid with a very slight odor of the iodoform. The oleate of mercury with iodoform is markedly serviceable when syphilis affects the mucous surfaces, often curing this obstinate form when other remedies have been tried in vain. For example, I have used this combination in a large number of cases of syphilitic ulceration of the tongue, in which the organ has been enlarged and its surface covered with tubercles, ulcers, and fissures, with most decided success, after other remedies had entirely failed. I generally pencil with the preparation the surface of the organ twice a week, and I am convinced of its value in these harassing cases by the repeated good results I have witnessed by its use. The same combination is very beneficial in pityriasis, especially of the hairy parts of the body. It is one of the best parasiticides, and is useful in favus, tinea tonsurans, eczema marginatum, and tinea versicolor. In using it in this latter affection, the surface should always be washed with soap and water preparatory to its application, and after repeated use it will be found that the itching will cease, and the fawn-colored, dry, and branny scales will gradually lessen until all traces of the disease have disappeared.

The oil of ergot, the next remedial agent that I shall refer to,

came under my observation in the following curious manner. Eight or nine months since, while conversing and examining with Dr. Wolff, of Philadelphia, in his laboratory, some *medicated soaps* and *oleates*, I was attracted to an *oily* liquid that stood on one of his tables, and upon inquiry I was informed that it was a refuse material known as oil of ergot. Dr. Wolff at the same time offered to send some of this oil to the dispensary, and added that I might find it useful in some skin affections. The preparation was accordingly sent, and after using it for some months I was agreeably surprised to find most decided benefit in its use for a number of cutaneous diseases. Since using the oil of ergot, I have carefully searched the various therapeutic works and the different journals, and have failed to find any one who has previously made any observation upon its external use.

The oil of ergot has long been known as one of the principal ingredients of the ergot. As found in the laboratory of the chemist, it is the waste material which has been left after preparing the various ergot preparations. If specially prepared, it can be made by the addition of benzine to ergot by the process of displacement, and afterwards allowing the benzine to slowly evaporate. When obtained from recently collected grains, it has a reddish-brown color, and about thirty-five parts of it are present in every hundred parts of ergot. It is a moderately thick, non-drying, fixed oil, and contains resin, cholesterin, and lactic acid. It has a slight odor of herring pickle, an acrid taste, and is soluble in both alcohol and alkaline solutions. As a local remedy, this refuse oil is much cheaper than any of the other oils and fats, and contains, in addition to this fixed oil, other ingredients that make it a most important therapeutic agent. When applied to the skin, it has both protective, soothing, and astringent action, and by its absorption frequently assists in nourishing the diseased part.

Excellent results can be obtained by using the oil of ergot in the acute variety of eczema. Particularly is it valuable in that form in which the part is hot, tumefied, and covered with small vesicles, some of which have burst, and the fluid coming in contact with the surrounding parts has caused considerable irritation. If the oil of ergot is painted over the surface in such a condition, it will exclude the air, allay the itching, constrict the engorged capillaries, moderate the weeping of the part, and prevent the formation of crusts upon the diseased surface. It is a most useful application in eczema of the lips, in which the surface is tumefied and fissured, and readily bleeds upon the slightest movement of the parts. It is also efficacious in cracked nipples. Pieces of cotton saturated with oil of

ergot, and placed over the lips or the nipples for a short time each evening before retiring, generally arrests the diseased state. The oil of ergot is a most important remedy in herpes of the genitals. Applied either with a brush or a piece of cotton in this affection, it allays the red, swollen, smarting, and burning sensation of the parts by its soothing and astringent action.

Few remedies are so efficacious as oil of ergot in checking the formation of scales in seborrhœa of the scalp and other hairy parts of the body. If there be an accumulation of scales and sebum upon the scalp, and the hairs be shorn down to its surface, the free use of this oil will bring about the most happy results. In a number of instances I have witnessed the efficacy of this remedy used in the following manner: I direct the patient at night-time, just before retiring, to pour a quantity of the oil of ergot upon the scalp, and to rub it in thoroughly until all the masses of sebum become soft and loose, and the surface is saturated with the oil. The head should then be protected by either an *oiled silk*, muslin, or flannel cap, or a bandage, in order to prevent the oil from soaking through and soiling the bed linen. In the morning the dressing should be removed, the scalp covered with a copious lather of soap, and afterwards washed out with warm water, so as to get rid of all the loose masses of sebum. The patient should next dry carefully the surface with towels, and again rub into the scalp a small quantity of the oil of ergot, as a hair oil. This preparation is to be preferred for this purpose to either olive, almond, or any of the bland oils, both for its cheapness and for its medicinal activity upon the diseased state of the scalp. It not only overcomes mechanically the condition of the parts, but likewise arrests by its soothing and astringent action the dry and lustreless state of the hairs and the dead appearance of the scalp. This twofold purpose that the oil of ergot fulfils, makes it superior to all other medicinal preparations that are used for seborrhœa sicca at the present time. In using the oil of ergot for seborrhœa sicca of the scalp where a stimulating action was indicated, I have sometimes added one or two ounces of alcohol to three or four ounces of oil of ergot, and applied in the same manner over the surface with the most beneficial results.

The effect of the oil of ergot in seborrhœa of the genitals of both sexes is just as conspicuous. It should, however, in being used on this part of the economy be penciled over the surface, or applied with a piece of cotton, on account of the delicate condition of the mucous membrane of the parts. If used in the above manner, it will soften up the whitish cheesy masses which collect about these parts,

check decomposition and bad odor, and arrest all red, hot, and irritable condition of the surface.

Oil of ergot is also of great service as a local application in erysipelas. Brushing frequently the surface in this disease with oil of ergot, relieves, by its soothing and astringent action, the tender and hot sensation, and causes the puffy, dry, and glazed appearance to abate.

In rosacea, or an enlargement of the bloodvessels and tissue of the face, after making punctures over the patches with a needle knife, and allowing the surface to bleed freely, the application of the oil of ergot will soothe the part, constrict the bloodvessels, and thus modify very much the diseased action.

Before concluding these remarks upon oil of ergot I should add that I have found it equally efficacious in various affections of the mucous membrane. In catarrh of the nasal passages, I have saturated a piece of cotton with the oil of ergot, and applied it by means of a probang with the most beneficial results.

Applied with a piece of cotton in ulceration of the cervix the oil of ergot has acted with great promptness. In gleet, I have had some marked cures from its use by passing a catheter and injecting the oil far back in the *urethra*. In both leucorrhœa and gonorrhœa I have used from two drachms to one ounce of the oil of ergot, made into six ounce emulsion, and directed it to be injected night and morning, in a number of cases with marked success.

I have, in concluding this paper, simply mentioned the local use of the oil of ergot in other affections of the mucous membrane not properly belonging to the title of my paper. I hope, however, before long to hear further from some of my professional brethren concerning the local use of this valuable preparation that has, previous to my observation, been cast aside as refuse material.