

Alcohol Injection in Obstinate Pruritus Ani

August 1917

The technique of injection is simple. The area of itching is carefully noted from the patient's description. Under general or local anaesthesia the injection is made so that this whole area is anaesthetised. In nearly all cases a local anaesthetic, usually novocain (1 per cent.) or quinine and urea hydrochloride (1 per cent.), was used. This form of anaesthesia has proved satisfactory. The syringe is filled with alcohol (95 per cent.) and the usual fine hypodermic needle used for the injection. The needle is carried entirely through the skin vertically, and then is inclined sharply so that it lies nearly parallel to the surface. When the needle is properly inserted in the subcutaneous fat, it can be moved fairly freely from side to side under the skin and can be felt moving with the finger placed over it. If this freedom of movement is lacking, the needle is probably engaged in the corium, and if injections are thus

made, sloughs may result. With the needle properly placed the whole area involved is injected, enough alcohol being used to underlay the area thoroughly. The injection may be carried up to the margin of the anus, but the writer has never injected the anal canal itself, nor has he reason to believe that this would have improved the results. Of course, before any injection is made, the skin is cleansed as for any other operation procedure.

This method accomplishes practically the same thing as the operative treatment for pruritis, and is indicated in those cases of great intensity in which the usual measures have failed. It has advantages over operative procedures. It is safer—there is no undermined skin with impaired circulation, and a potential dead space under it, in an area impossible to keep clean. It entails no dressings, stitches, or other trouble.—John Hopkins, "Hospital Bulletin," p. 242.

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