

CURRENT COMMENT AND CASE REPORTS

CURRENT COMMENT is a new department in ANESTHESIOLOGY. In it will appear invited professional and scientific correspondence, abbreviated reports of interesting cases, material of interest to anesthesiologists reprinted from varied sources, brief descriptions of apparatus and appliances, technical suggestions, and short citations of experiences with drugs and methods in anesthesiology. Contributions are urgently solicited. Editorial discretion is reserved in selecting and preparing those published. The author's name or initials will appear with all items included.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor:

May I call the attention of anesthetists and hospital administrators to a practical device which affords useful information on the explosive hazard of gas mixtures?

This apparatus is termed an "Explosimeter" or combustible gas indicator. It has been used for years in industry for checking gas hazards in sewers, man-holes, ship holds, distilleries, paint and varnish plants, etc. The basic design is that of a platinum filament, heated by batteries and balanced electrically in the form of a standard Wheatstone bridge. Gas mixtures are aspirated into the unit by a sampling bulb and the combustibility of the mixture is read directly from a meter.

Flashback arrestors prevent propagation of flames from the instrument. The accuracy of the readings is sufficient, although for careful work calibration against known mixtures is required. Commercial meters are calibrated usually in terms of gasoline, but for use in hospitals a meter calibrated for ethyl ether, cyclopropane, etc., could be purchased.

To the Editor:

Anaesthesia using cyclopropane in closed circuit with soda lime for carbon dioxide absorption became somewhat hazardous in our hands during a few weeks of very hot weather last summer. We found that in spite of frequent changing of the soda lime in our Heidbrink machines, the canisters became very hot over short periods of time. At the same time alarming increases in the respiratory and cardiac rates of our pa-

A number of interesting observations can be made with this apparatus. For example, one can test the hazard of an anesthetic mixture at various levels from the head of the patient to the floor. The hazard can be checked around fluoroscopes, light switches, etc. Data obtained are acceptable to fire underwriters when they are evaluating insurance risks. The instrument illustrates the ready diffusibility of anesthetic vapors, together with their accumulation in dependent areas. Finally, such a device is of value in a teaching institution since it offers a ready means of illustrating the problem of explosibility and anesthesia. The cost, which averages \$70, makes the meter a perfectly reasonable purchase for any institution.

Various models can be purchased from the Mine Safety Appliances Co., Pittsburgh, Pa., or the Davis Emergency Equipment Co., New York City.

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tients were observed. These occurred in spite of minimal numbers of drapes used and liberal use of intravenous normal saline.

In an effort to reduce the temperature of the gases being rebreathed, we hit upon a method which may prove useful at some time to others in a similar predicament.

The wick of the ether vaporizer on the Heidbrink machine is removed and a short piece of wide bore rubber tubing reaching