
"During the war need arose to investigate synthetic mydriatics which might be used in place of atropine if supplies of the latter became inadequate. Synthetic atropine was thought to present a far too difficult manufacturing problem and the only synthetic mydriatic of the atropine type in common use, viz. eucatropine, is a much less powerful drug. The supply of homatropine is, of course, dependent upon the same sources as atropine. . . . The practical outcome of the work . . . was the discovery of a synthetic mydriatic, benzilyloxyethyl dimethylethlammonium chloride, which has been referred to so far as E3, but which it is proposed to name lachesine. . . . While it is unlikely that lachesine will replace atropine in normal times, it may well prove to be a valuable addition to the armoury of the ophthalmic surgeon both as a short-acting mydriatic and cycloplegic, and for the treatment of patients who are allergic to the belladonna alkaloids." 18 references.

J. C. M. C.


"Until the 19th century, the remedies used in medical practice were either inorganic mineral salts or crude extracts from plants. As the study of organic chemistry progressed, these crude extracts were analyzed, their active constituents were isolated and their constitution determined. From this the next step was to try to synthesize these substances in the laboratory from such materials as coal tar, etc., and a further step was taken when attempts were made to improve on nature by altering the formula of a substance slightly and so enhancing its therapeutic effects. . . . A very good ex-