

Page Chest Pavilion of the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital for permission to study patients under their care; and Roche Products Pty. Ltd. for financial support.

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Drugs

HOSPITAL PHARMACIST Pharmacists are no longer merely custodians and dispensers of drugs, but are now medication experts, deeply involved in total patient care. Many community pharmacists are now keeping medication histories that bring together comprehensive information about prescribed and self-administered medications, and use this information to alert physicians to possible therapeutic incompatibilities. Pharmacists are also in a good position to monitor long-term drug therapy and observe allergic and other adverse drug reactions. The hospital pharmacist plans and implements medication systems that minimize errors and frees the nurse from time-consuming tasks related to the administration of drugs and record keeping. (*Bowles, C. C.: Pharmacist's Changing Role: Out of Drug Room, Into System, Mod. Hosp.* 114: 126 (Feb.) 1970.)

MORPHINE ANESTHESIA Morphine (0.5 to 3.0 mg/kg body weight) was used alone or in combination with inhalation anesthetic agents for anesthesia in more than 1,100 patients undergoing open-heart surgery. A detailed evaluation of cardiovascular function was made in a small number of these patients. Morphine, 1 mg/kg, was administered intravenously to seven patients undergoing aortic valve operation for disease and eight patients without major heart or lung disease undergoing other types of surgery. The cardiac subjects had higher control pulse rates and lower control stroke indices than the normal subjects. In the cardiac patients, but not in the other patients, significant increases in cardiac index, stroke index, central venous pressure, and pulmonary arterial pressure, and a significant decrease in systemic vascular resistance, were observed after morphine was administered. These findings suggest that large doses of morphine may be used safely in patients with minimal circulatory reserves. (*Lowenstein, E., and others: Cardiovascular Response to Large Doses of Intravenous Morphine in Man, New Eng. J. Med.* 281: 1389 (Dec.) 1969.)