We have used this device in more than 100 anesthesias, and it has worked well in all cases. At present this box is not made commercially.

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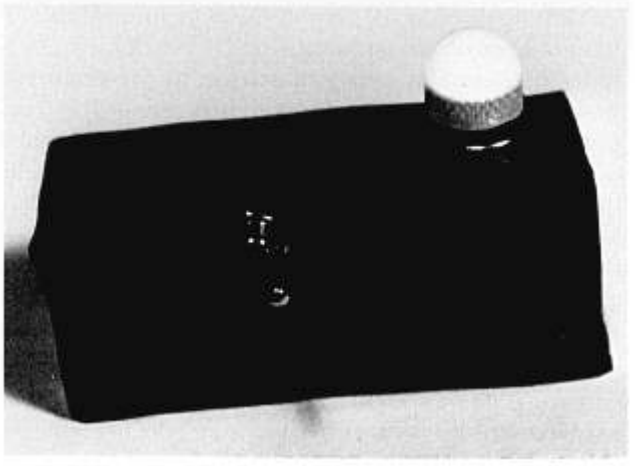

FIG. 1. Light box.

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Placental Transfer of Nitroglycerin

To the Editor:—In a recent case report,[1] prolonged depolarization neuromuscular blockade following administration of trimethaphan and succinylcholine in a pre-eclamptic parturient was explained on the basis of cholinesterase inhibition by trimethaphan. (The baby was unaffected.) It was suggested that alternative drugs such as nitroglycerin be considered for parenteral treatment in hypertensive pregnant women. There is, however, a significant difference in molecular weights and consequent predicted placental transfers between these two antihypertensive drugs.[2] Trimethaphan, with a molecular weight of 597, should have rather limited transmission across the human placenta, whereas nitroglycerin, with a molecular weight of 227, would be expected to cross readily and thereby decrease the baby's blood pressure in a manner similar to the mother's. Abnormally low blood pressures have been demonstrated in non-depressed newborns following administration of hydralazine (molecular weight 160) thereapy to mothers.[3] Neonatal hypotension is undesirable because it interferes with the normal changeover from fetal to adult circulation. We therefore believe that the safest solution to the problem is not a change in antihypertensive drug, but a decrease in succinylcholine dosage combined with continuous monitoring of neuromuscular activity by means of a nerve stimulator.

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In reply:—Drs. Diaz and Marx appropriately emphasize the importance of considering the effects on the fetus of drugs given to the mother. In addition, they correctly state that nitroglycerin may cross the placenta more readily than trimethaphan. Their recommendation to decrease the dosage of succinylcholine, however, is not an ideal solution to the problem. Our patient experienced prolonged apnea after a single dose of succinylcholine. The use of less succinylcholine might have resulted in inadequate paralysis, difficulty with intubation, and increased risk of vomiting and aspiration.