

Happiness Through Health

by Otto McClarrin

ANCIENT DRUG AND SPECIAL LIGHT CURING SKIN DISEASE PSORIASIS: While not life-threatening, psoriasis, which is caused by over-rapid growth of skin cells, can be a serious physical and psychological problem. Patches of scaly, itchy skin can spread over 90 percent of the body. Many patients are so embarrassed by the unsightly condition they avoid all public contact.

A revolutionary treatment for severe psoriasis has proved overwhelmingly successful in nationwide tests involving more than a thousand victims of the disfiguring skin disease. The treatment, developed in 1974 by a team of Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) specialists, combines the use of an ancient Egyptian drug and a new form of light.

More than eight million Americans are plagued by chronic psoriasis at an annual medical cost of nearly \$1 billion. In the tests, 1,308 patients were treated two or three times weekly at 16 medical centers across the country over an 18-month period.

In only three percent of the cases did the treatment fail to work, and only one percent developed temporary dizziness believed associated with standing in the special light. Eight percent left the study for personal reasons.

Of the 1,005 patients whose psoriasis cleared up, 787 needed fewer than 30 treatments. Among the original MGH group of patients testing the new treatment, one 50-year-old man was enabled to resume sex relations with his wife for the first time in seven years. Another went to a public beach for the first time in his life.

Not only is the new treatment quick, dry and clean in contrast to the messy, inconvenient and expensive coal-tar baths presently used in severe cases, the patients also acquire as a side dividend -- a glowing, roseate tan.

The drug used is called 8-methoxypsoralen, a member of a family of compounds that are activated in the human system by sunlight. For the psoriasis treatment, however, GTE Sylvania of Danvers had to develop an intensified version of long-wave ultraviolet light, popularly called "black" light and used in discotheques.

To undergo the treatment, each volunteer took a capsule of the drug (at a cost of about 15 cents apiece), waited two to three hours and then, while completely disrobed, stood in a small enclosed chamber for periods of one to 30 minutes of exposure to the "black" light.

The treatment worked quickest, the study found, for patients with lighter skins, ("those who always burn, never tan"). Conversely, those who "always tan, never burn" required more frequent treatment.

Each treatment requires about an hour, and in the future is expected to be able to be available through physicians' offices. While the new treatment cannot be made available generally until approved by the Food and Drug Administration, the success of the trials is expected to hasten FDA approval.

Because of the inherited underlying cause of psoriasis persists, the new treatment cannot be regarded as a "cure." However the tests showed that once a patient's psoriasis had cleared, flare-ups of the skin condition could be controlled by a maintenance treatment once every week to three weeks.

MGH biochemist Madhukar A. Pathak discovered that the drug spreads throughout the body, but is activated only where skin is exposed to the special light. The drug works by attaching to the genetic material in the cell and thereby, inhibiting replication.

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Authors of the 16-center study include Drs. John W. Melski, John A. Parrish and Thomas B. Fitzpatrick of the MGH dermatology service; Dr. Lewis Tanenbaum, of the VA Hospital in San Francisco; Dr. Howard L. Bleich of Beth Israel Hospital, Boston and 28 participating investigators.

NEW DAY BEGUN

by

Benjamin L. Hooks



Coming behind his prolonged and stepped up attacks on the Soviet-Cuban presence in Africa, President Carter's foreign policy speech at Annapolis seems to raise more questions than answers. The basic question that is causing deep concern among many African diplomats and many Americans is, what is the Carter Administration's policy on Africa.

Among Africans themselves, there is a sharp difference between traditionally pro-French nations like Senegal and more independent-minded countries like Tanzania. Consequently, we find the highly respected Leopold Senghor expressing alarm over what he perceives as the spread of communism throughout Africa.

In response to France's call for an all African peace-keeping force for southern Africa, Senegal is one of the very few countries that is providing troops -- and these nations are all former French colonies.

Tanzania's Julius Nyerere, a highly respected world Statesman, on the other hand defended the Soviet Union's role in Africa which the peace-keeping force is ostensibly aimed at countering. Instead, he denounced "hysterical voices" he felt were dominating the Carter Administration.

His unprecedented summoning of the entire foreign diplomatic corps to his office in Dar Es Salaam underscored his concern for U. S. - Soviet confrontation on the continent. He declared that the West still considers Africa to be within its sphere of influence and acts accordingly. "Furthermore, current developments show that the greater immediate danger to Africa's freedom comes from nations in the Western bloc."

This too is the view of many knowledgeable Americans, Africanists, black as well as white, senators and congressmen. What seems to be most troubling is that the U. S. is once again caught in the position of responding to events outside its borders that do not immediately nor necessarily threaten its strategic interests. No doubt, the U. S. should be concerned about losing ground to the Soviets in Africa. But the problem arises on the question of how to stop the erosion of U. S. influence.

Given the history of Western colonialism in Africa and white American racism, the Carter Administration seems to be placing itself in a position of reverting to old, discredited imperialistic practices. It seems to be, furthermore, serving French interests rather than fulfilling U. S. goals.

A year ago when France rushed in to protect General Mobutu from the invading Katanga rebels in southern Zaire, President Giscard d'Estaing unabashedly declared that "it was necessary to act on our own to preserve the security and territorial integrity of a Western-oriented state which, by definition, means the protection of Western interests."

Given this reality, is President Carter seeking to support the French President's designs rather than pursuing the development of the forward-looking African policy that he initiated early in his Administration. Two overriding concerns for Africans today are majority rule in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa and desperately needed economic development. Mr. Carter has squarely voiced support for these goals, and the NAACP fully supports him.

What is now needed, therefore, is a clearly developed, comprehensive U. S. policy on Africa along the lines enunciated by U. N. Ambassador Andrew Young that fulfills long-term U. S. and African needs. Mr. Carter should draw a lesson from the cool reaction of Britain, and old hand at colonialism, to the President's call for NATO to

extend its sphere of concern to Africa, thus making the continent a theatre for East-West confrontations.

Said Prime Minister James Callaghan in reaction to such a proposal: "There seems to be a number of Christopher Columbuses setting out from the United States to discover Africa for the first time. It's been there a long time." In other words, hysteria is no policy at all.

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By Inez Kaiser



Here comes summer and here comes the bride. But who is that fashionable guy with an obvious flare for formal attire at it's best. This year's groom will be a highlight of the wedding celebration.

The time is past for the groom to go unnoticed until that final kiss. Many bridal shows and bridal couture houses are emphasizing the showings of fashions for the groom equally matched in splendor to the bridal designs. The young soon-to-be weds are searching for a combination of stylish formality coupled with ease and comfort.

Individual expression plays an important role in the selection of attire for such a joyous occasion. The mood and feeling the groom wants to portray needs to be and can be reflected in the formal attire he chooses.

The alternatives are there for those who want a rainbow wedding with romantic colors of blue, jade green, silver grey and beige. Or the satin trimmed tuxedos with an air of sentimental tradition.

The After-Six Formal showings in Las Vegas was a star-studded array of formal wear. For those who want fashions without being obvious, try a look of elegance in a tuxedo with rich satin doekin trim. Always a hit is a groom in black onyx with black velvet detailing adding a look of importance.

Formal shirts are tucked, pleated and very elegant. The groomsmen can stand out with coordinated ensembles to match the groom. If by chance you do not wish to invest in a new tuxedo, renting is always appropriate.

Let the saying now be "Here comes the groom" in all the fashionable splendor, and glory that is now his.

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