

THE DEPARTMENT OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES OF PHARMACY

SYNONYMS TO SPARE.

BY C. J. ZUFALL.*

If to no one else comes the thought that there are too many synonyms, it surely comes too often to the instructor in the School of Pharmacy and especially to the teacher of *Materia Medica*.

Outside of Pharmacy and Medicine it is quite desirable for one to know synonyms, especially when one is writing, because often one needs to use words with only slight differences of meaning. But in Pharmacy synonyms are used for identical substances, and it seems as if there are far too many. Still we find the Revision Committees of the U. S. Pharmacopœia and of the National Formulary adding many such names to the long list already existing. Not only these, but the wholesalers and the manufacturers are hanging on to synonyms rarely used and also adding new ones.

The solving of a cross-word puzzle shows how many synonyms a person knows. The writing of an examination in Pharmacy or by a State Board shows how many synonyms a student does not know.

To be sure the druggist needs to know the synonyms which his customers and physicians use. The crude drug trade also demands a knowledge of them, buy why increase the number needlessly?

In schools of pharmacy much time is consumed in teaching and learning synonyms. Time is valuable and sometimes one stops to wonder why it should be used for this purpose. If it is necessary to learn the synonyms which are in use, then the question arises of how to prevent the increase of their number.

Synonyms have crept into pharmacy through various channels. It is impossible to cut out some of these, but there should be some way of preventing the addition by the profession of some that are unnecessary.

When the Committees of Revision give a new Latin title to a drug, the old Latin title, of necessity, becomes a synonym which is added to the long list already existing.

Then, too, so many official English names are being changed that students have no means of determining which is the English name and which is the synonym. The English name is supposed to be the translation of the Latin title. The composition of the substance has not been changed, then why consume valuable time concocting new titles?

The Committee of Revision of the U. S. P. X changed "Unguentum Hydrargyri Dilutum" to "Unguentum Hydrargyri Mite." Is this consistent? About the only other place where the term "mite" is used is in connection with calomel. It seems as if this new Latin title, suggesting calomel, would lead to considerable confusion.

The same committee changed the Latin titles of forty-six other drugs. Of these, twelve were radical changes, fourteen are simpler, while five are not as

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simple. Three were formerly synonyms, two were formerly chemical names and one is an entirely new name.

There are forty-six new English names in the U. S. P. X. Eighteen of these are simpler than the former names; three are not as simple; five are former chemical names and one is entirely new.

The 47 old Latin titles plus the 46 old English names become 93 new synonyms for us to teach and the students to learn.

In the ninth revision of the Pharmacopœia we find that the Latin titles of 29 drugs were changed; 14 of these were radical changes, that is, the new Latin titles were quite different from the old ones. In the ninth revision we also find 28 new English names, seven of which were quite different from the old names. The old Latin titles and old English names become synonyms which we must see that students learn. These synonyms have been added from within the profession so we can blame no other agency.

In the eighth revision of the Pharmacopœia we find 140 changes in the Latin titles. Twenty-four of these are radical changes. In this same revision we find changes in the English names, 60 of which are radically different from the names of the same drugs in the U. S. P. VIII.

The 140 old Latin titles plus the 60 old English names became 200 synonyms for us to learn.

In the U. S. P. VIII we find the Latin title of oil of cinnamon to be "Oleum Cinnamom." In the U. S. P. IX the same substance was known as "Oleum Cassiæ" while in the U. S. P. X the drug regained its former title of "Oleum Cinnamomi."

In the U. S. P. VIII the Latin title of soluble ferric phosphate was "Ferri Phosphas Solubilis;" in the U. S. P. IX it was "Ferri Phosphas." In the U. S. P. X the substance became soluble again and is now known as "Ferri Phosphas Solubilis."

Adhesive plaster was known in the U. S. P. VII as "Emplastrum Resinæ;" in the U. S. P. VIII it was known as "Emplastrum Adhaesivum;" in the U. S. P. IX it was known as "Emplastrum Elasticum" while the U. S. P. X has given back the name of "Emplastrum Adhæsivum" which it bore in 1900.

Chloral hydrate has had three different Latin titles and three different English names in the last four revisions of the Pharmacopœia.

In the fourth revision of the National Formulary we find 104 new Latin titles, 56 of which are radically different from those of the National Formulary III.

Do all these changes and readoptions indicate a tendency toward simplicity, accuracy or what?

Pharmacists can use their time to better advantage in improving pharmacy than by using it in learning new Latin titles and synonyms.

It is probably necessary to teach pharmacy students these names but to them it seems a joke to learn "Pilulæ Hydrargyri Chloridi Mitis Compositæ" as the Latin title for so small a pill.

Could it be possible that the course in Pharmacy was increased from two to three years in order that students might have a year in which to learn synonyms and new Latin titles?

If revision committees would only avoid adding new synonyms and if the

manufacturers, wholesalers and jobbers would use only English names or Latin titles on their packages, pharmacists might forget synonyms and devote more time to raising the standards of the profession.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON PHARMACEUTICAL SYLLABUS.

Philadelphia, Pa., September 13, 1926.

To the American Pharmaceutical Association:

The Pharmaceutical Syllabus Committee respectfully submits the following report:

As has been described in previous reports, the adoption of a minimum three-year course in pharmacy makes it necessary to issue a fourth edition of the "Syllabus," but this could not be undertaken until other conditions affecting its preparation are fulfilled. Of these, the new editions of the "United States Pharmacopœia" and of the "National Formulary" have appeared; it is expected that the report of the Commonwealth Foundation on its investigation of the practice of pharmacy from a functional standpoint will be issued very soon, and the increased annual contributions from the three parent associations will enable the Committee to pay the balance of the cost for printing the third edition of the Syllabus by the end of this year. It is, therefore, expected that the Committee will be able to begin active work on the preparation of the fourth edition of the Syllabus during the coming year, and the progress of the work will be recorded in its bulletins which are published in the JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION.

For purposes of record, the present membership of the Committee is given here:

FROM AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION.

Terms
expire.

1926	E. L. Newcomb, 719 Sixth Avenue, S. E., Minneapolis, Minn.
1927	E. G. Eberle, 10 West Chase St., Baltimore, Md.
1928	E. F. Kelly, Lombard & Green Streets, Baltimore, Md.
1929	G. M. Beringer, 501 Federal Street, Camden, N. J.
1930	H. H. Rusby, 115 West 68th Street, New York, N. Y.
1931	W. G. Gregory, 185 Parkside Avenue, Buffalo, N. Y.
1932	W. H. Rudder, Salem, Indiana.

FROM AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES OF PHARMACY.

1926	E. F. Cook, 145 North Tenth Street, Philadelphia, Pa.
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1928	J. A. Koch, Bluff & Pride Streets, Pittsburgh, Pa.
1929	T. J. Bradley, 179 Longwood Avenue, Boston, Mass.
1930	F. J. Wulling, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn.
1931	J. G. Beard, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.
1932	E. V. Lynn, University of Washington, Seattle, Wash.

FROM NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOARDS OF PHARMACY.

1926	G. C. Diekman, 115 West 68th Street, New York, N. Y.
1927	S. A. Williams, Troy, Alabama.
1928	John Culley, 2479 Washington Avenue, Ogden, Utah.
1929	Mathias Noll, 605 Atchison Street, Atchison, Kansas.
1930	W. D. Jones, 1 East Bay Street, Jacksonville, Fla.
1931	Frank Schachleiter, ¹ P. O. Box 1133, Little Rock, Ark.
1932	R. L. Swain, Sykesville, Md.

(Signed) THEODORE J. BRADLEY,
Chairman, for the Committee.

¹ Deceased.