

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF PHARMACEUTICAL RESEARCH

Compiled by A. G. DuMez, Reporter on the Progress of Pharmacy.

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DETERMINATION OF THE REASONABLE OR PERMISSIBLE MARGIN OF ERROR IN DISPENSING. IV. PILLS.*

BY MARVIN J. ANDREWS.¹

INTRODUCTION.

This, the fourth paper of this series,² deals with pills.

Pills which the pharmacist compounds in the filling of prescriptions are usually made by intimately mixing the ingredients called for in the dry state in a mortar, adding the required amount of liquid excipient and kneading to develop a plastic mass. The mass, when of the proper plasticity, is removed from the mortar and rolled into a pill pipe. The latter is cut into the desired number of parts which are then rolled into pill form by hand. The selection of the excipient and the amount to be used is in most cases left to the judgment of the pharmacist.

The possibilities for error, where operations of the foregoing nature are involved in the filling of prescriptions, are numerous, and to determine to what extent each is a contributing factor would be almost an endless task. Since, however, some investigations to determine the variations in the weight of pills made by pharmacists have been reported, further studies along this line seemed to be warranted, if for no other reason than to demonstrate the difficulties encountered in attempting to determine what constitutes a reasonable margin or error in preparations of this type.

The factors largely responsible for variations in the weight of pills made by the pharmacist are undoubtedly (1) the nature of the excipient used, (2) personal equation and (3) the loss in weight on standing. To determine to what extent each of these factors contribute to the total error, the studies reported in this paper were undertaken.

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² *Jour. A. Ph. A.*, 22 (1933), 755, 838; 23 (1934), 350, 421.