

The present results showing that rats are relatively insensitive to histamine during the summer months may be linked with the seasonal variation in the response of rats to anaphylactic shock, experimental traumatic shock, and tourniquet shock, some colonies being resistant during the period from May to August each year (Ankier, Dawson, Karady & West, 1965). Furthermore, the secondary rise of blood pressure produced in A.R.C. rats by the injection of histamine and probably resulting from the release of catecholamines helps to explain why A.R.C. rats are more resistant to histamine liberators such as dextran than are BW rats (Ankier, Harris, Luscombe & West, 1965; Fearn & West, 1965). The importance of stating the time of year when experimental results are obtained is again stressed.

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### *meso*-OO'-Succinylbis( $\beta$ -methylcholine)

SIR,—Attention has been drawn (Lesser, 1961) to an apparently specific effect of *meso*-succinylbis( $\beta$ -methylcholine), in that it produced a contracture in the innervated chick biventer cervicis preparation, whereas the optical enantiomorphs showed a reduction of twitch height without contracture. The material used was believed to be a mixture of the racemic and *meso*-OO'-succinylbis( $\beta$ -methylcholine iodides) (Clitherow, 1961).

Since the publication of that note, a sample of the *meso*-compound prepared by a specific synthesis has come to hand (Clitherow, personal communication) and has been tested. The results did not bear out the original observation. This compound not only had qualitatively the same action as the optical isomers but also had quantitatively an activity lying intermediate between theirs.

There are some indications that the effect previously observed may have been due to contamination of the commercially obtained 1-dimethylaminopropan-2-ol by 2-dimethylaminopropan-1-ol, which as a result, yielded some OO'-succinylbis( $\alpha$ -methylcholine). This is being further investigated.

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