
FIFTY YEARS AGO

Treatment of Mustard Gas Lesions of the Eye

To the Editors of
THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF OPHTHALMOLOGY.

Dear Sirs—An instruction EMSI 252 (revised) on this subject has been widely distributed to the officers, consultants and hospitals of the Emergency Medical Service. It came before the Medical Board of Moorfields Eye Hospital 'for your information.' The Medical Board considered the instruction and felt that several points in it required comment.

1. The use of albucid solution is advised at First Aid Posts and at Hospitals in cases in which the eyes have been affected by gas vapour or gas splashing. It must be pointed out that the use of sulphanilamide preparations is not directed against gas contamination but only against subsequent infection of the conjunctiva and that opinion as to its efficiency in this latter respect is far from being generally favourable.

2. No mention is made in the instruction of the very diverse lesions which may be produced by gas, most of them slight and very few of them serious.

3. No indication is given of the treatment necessary when the cornea is definitely involved and while water is advised for irrigation of the eye at an incident and at First Aid Posts, no advice is given as to the lotion to be used for the irrigations recommended at Hospitals.

It would appear that this instruction is not in fact the 'result of further experience' and should be withdrawn and replaced by a carefully considered and detailed note based on actual experience obtained in the last war and on substantiated experimental evidence.

We are,
Yours faithfully.
F. A. Juler.
MAURICE WHITING.