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With compliments of the Author.

A Brief Synopsis of the Therapeutics of Static Electricity.

BY

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A BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE
THERAPEUTICS OF STATIC ELECTRICITY.

BY S. H. MONELL, M. D.

WITH a view to present the recognized indications for static electricity in a form appropriate for ready reference, the following paper is submitted by the author. To those already familiar with the well-known properties of the galvanic and faradaic currents, the tabulated statement herein offered will furnish a convenient means of comparison. No attempt will be made to specify the various methods of administration, it being assumed that the reader is acquainted with the technique of operating the static machine. The writer's system of interrupting the static current has been described in other articles and to them the reader is referred. The sphere of therapeutic action of static electricity is sufficiently wide to be justly considered remarkable without proclaiming it a cure-all. In many acute inflammatory states there are other agents which will generally be called into use, yet even here there is some work which "static" can well do. Its chief field, however, is found in conditions, either acute or chronic, which have to do with nerve action, muscles and joints, pain, functional processes, and nutrition.

(a) It affords the most certain and permanent relief for lumbago, sciatica, rheumatic and muscular pains.

(b) Neuralgias of every kind seem to yield to it more speedily and permanently than to any other form of treatment. In the various types of head pains and in insomnia it is peculiarly efficacious.

(c) No other agent equals static electricity in combating hysterical states and associated conditions. It furnishes our best method of treating functional nervous diseases.

(d) It is an efficient regulator of deranged bodily functions and is not surpassed by any other agent in the successful treatment of that important class of ailments known as functional diseases.

(e) As a general tonic and as a stimulant to depressed nervous functions it is of the utmost service, especially in neurasthenia and in old cachexias. As a means of improving the general nervous tone of patients it is without a rival.

(f) Reflex irritation, peripheral neuroses, etc., yield in most cases to proper applications of this agent. Pruritus of various forms, the itching of eczema, etc., are cases in point.

(g) In all dietetic diseases it acts with decided benefit; it produces remarkable improvement in disturbed visceral functions, nausea, vertigo, dyspepsia, constipation, colic, etc. In chlorosis and anæmia and all perversions of nutritive processes it lends ready aid to the restoration of the normal functions.

(h) Diseases of the scalp. Patients undergoing several months of regular static treatment usually find that their hair ceases to fall out in combing and that the nutrition of the scalp improves.

(i) Exudations, infiltrations, localized œdemas, etc., are

quickly resolved and absorbed under skillful static administration.

(*j*) It usually surpasses all other forms of electricity in dealing with stiffened, contracted, or paralytic muscles, acute or chronic muscular deformities, and muscular spasm. The ease with which it will often conquer an obstinate case is one of the most surprising things in electro-therapeutics. Acute examples of these types not infrequently succumb to one or two séances of static.

(*k*) Its tonic action makes it a valuable agent in diseases of the heart, both functional and organic. Where coldness of the extremities or general want of vital warmth exists it possesses a singular power to promote the creation and distribution of animal heat.

(*l*) In locomotor ataxia it will do more to relieve pain and maintain a degree of comfort than any other agent. Used in conjunction with galvanism, it may arrest the progress of early cases indefinitely.

(*m*) It has given the most brilliant results in the treatment of hemiplegic, traumatic, and all forms of motor paralysis, and frequently restores complete muscular power after all other measures fail. Paralysis of the sphincters, of the vocal apparatus, or of any part of the body may be treated with better success by static than by other measures.

(*n*) It admittedly holds the highest place in the treatment of chorea.

(*o*) In epilepsy it produces excellent results in improving the general condition and in moderating the frequency and the severity of the attacks.

(*p*) In mental disturbances it should be faithfully tried whenever possible.

(*q*) Disorders of sensation are more rapidly improved by static electricity than by either galvanic or faradaic applications.

(*r*) In exophthalmic goitre it affords relief to some of the most distressing symptoms.

(*s*) In gout and rheumatism its efficiency has been reputed great since the earliest history of frictional machines; even in rheumatoid arthritis it has won praises.

(*t*) It is a powerful, painless, and effective tonic to the weakened muscles in lateral curvature of the spine; as a "massage" it is unequalled.

(*u*) In the treatment of chronic inflammatory and spasmodic diseases—such as influenza, phthisis, bronchitis, unresolved pneumonia, asthma, laryngitis, neuritis, synovitis, etc.—it gives excellent and often brilliant results.

(*v*) In dermatoses, especially those dependent for their origin upon neurotic or nutritional disturbances, it is either an all-sufficient remedy or a valuable adjunct to medicinal measures.

(*w*) In gynecology the static machine furnishes most valuable auxiliary aid to galvanism, and single-handed will conquer a large percentage of woman's troubles.

(*x*) In convalescence from acute disease, debilitating fevers, and in all the tedious, irksome conditions of a slow recovery from an exhausting illness, the tonic and vitalizing action of static electricity excels any other agent in the author's experience.

(*y*) It is an invaluable tonic for the general infirmities of old age. Its constitutional effects increase the sum of vitality and it will do much to relieve the distressing symptoms which render declining years a burden and a care.

(*z*) No other electrical application may be made so gratifying to the patient; no other method of treatment elicits such frequent expressions of satisfaction; no remedy may be more swift and permanent in action; none may be more easily applied in many cases.

This list does not exhaust its powers of usefulness, but will point the way to its application in various obscure conditions where diagnosis is difficult and where past treatment has yielded poor results. In these anomalous cases great aid may not infrequently be obtained from skillfully directed static electricity. Nearly every possible application of faradism can be duplicated with "static," and the full limit of its many-sided capabilities probably lies far beyond our present knowledge and experience. That it can promptly remove all pain and soreness from a superficial burn I recently demonstrated to the satisfaction of a careless assistant who had come in too close contact with a gas heater in my office. Its control over nerve and muscle functions borders upon the phenomenal. Considered from every standpoint, a successfully operated and powerful static machine is, without doubt, the most surprising single therapeutic weapon in the whole arsenal of scientific medicine. Even with its infirmities it is marvelous, and if ever perfected it will be invincible in popular favor.

NOTE.—Since I wrote this article an improved static machine has been placed before the profession by the Galvano-Faradic Manufacturing Company which appears destined to greatly extend the therapeutic value of this form of electrical administration.—AUTHOR.

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EDITED BY

FRANK P. FOSTER, M.D.

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