

treatment was given and a few days later further general improvement had occurred. Three weeks later he had his 7th treatment (9th convulsion). On the third day after this he awoke feeling 'completely different'. All feeling of malaise had departed and a robust appetite returned. All pain vanished and bowel motions were formed and reduced to 3 or 4 a day. He progressed rapidly from strength to strength. Four weeks later he had his last, 8th treatment (10th convulsion). After this he returned to full health.

I saw him 2 years ago. In the intervening 20 years he had had no further bowel trouble. Used properly, ECT is a simple very benign procedure and has worked well in the only 2 other cases of colitis that I have treated. It would seem to be worth a trial before resorting to dangerous drugs and drastic surgery.

Yours faithfully
R J T WOODLAND
6 August 1984

Quick preparation of slides using a microcomputer

From Dr D Parker

*Consultant Physician/Oncologist
Bradford Royal Infirmary, Bradford*

Dear Sir, The preparation of a 35 mm lantern slide usually needs several stages of checking and redrawing before it is satisfactory. A quick technique using a microcomputer, monitor and camera is described.

Figure 1 was prepared using a BBC model microcomputer, EDG graphics software, Microvitec Cub colour monitor and Nikon F2 Photomic camera. Exposure was 0.5 second at f5.6 using Kodachrome 64 colour slide film. This length of exposure requires a tripod or steady

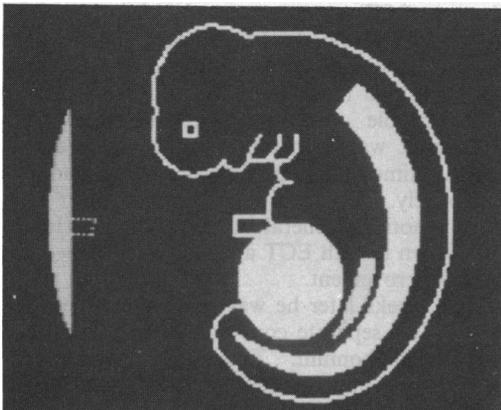


Figure 1. Human embryo at 27 days

base for the camera. An RGB interface and colour monitor are needed for high quality colour and resolution and long exposure is needed to capture the whole of the television frame evenly. The picture can be altered as needed and its datafile stored on tape or floppy disc. The total cost of the apparatus is approximately £900.

D PARKER
5 September 1984

Colchicine ameliorates constipation in Parkinson's disease

From Dr R Sandyk and Dr M A Gillman
*South African Brain Research Institute
Johannesburg, South Africa*

Sir, Constipation is a common distressing symptom of Parkinson's disease (PD) caused by reduced mobility of the bowel and often aggravated by the anticholinergic effects of anti-parkinsonian drugs.

Recently, we have found colchicine given at small dosage (0.3–0.6 mg) to be effective in controlling this distressing symptom, which was refractory to ordinary measures (including enemas and other laxatives). This drug was used since one of its well known side effects is enhancement of intestinal motility which, in some cases, leads to diarrhoea (Reynolds & Prasad 1982). The colchicine was well tolerated in all 3 cases so treated and seemed to have had no adverse effects on either the anti-parkinsonian drugs or the course of the PD. We therefore suggest that colchicine may well have a place in the treatment of refractory constipation, particularly in PD.

This is, to our knowledge, the first report of the therapeutic use of colchicine as a laxative (Reynolds & Prasad 1982).

R SANDYK
M A GILLMAN
4 September 1984

Reference

Reynolds J E F & Prasad A B eds
(1982) *Martindale: the Extra Pharmacopoeia*. 28th edn. Pharmaceutical Press, London

Erythema multiforme following DPT vaccination

From Dr Alexander K C Leung
*Clinical Assistant Professor of Paediatrics
University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada*

Dear Sir, Erythema multiforme has been reported in patients after receiving hepatitis B virus vaccine (Feldson & Sampliner 1984) and measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine (Freeman 1982). I report 2 children who developed