

Stability of Mosquito Venom *in vitro*.

EARL B. MCKINLEY, WARREN F. DRAPER, JR., AND FRED C. BAKER.

From the Department of Bacteriology, Hygiene and Preventive Medicine, School of Medicine, The George Washington University, Washington, D.C., and the Department of Entomology, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y.

In 1929 the senior author¹ extracted a toxic substance from macerated salivary glands of the yellow fever mosquito, *Aedes aegypti* Linnaeus. At the close of the experiments which were conducted then, a few milliliters of the venom extract remained. This aliquot was passed through a bacterial filter, and a very small amount sealed in glass, and stored in a refrigerator.

On October 14, 1937, the tube was removed from storage. Inspection showed that the filtrate had remained water-clear with no evidence of a precipitate. The glass seal was broken and 0.1 cc of the contents was injected, intradermally, over the biceps muscle of each of 3 persons. Each injection of the salivary gland extract immediately was followed by a control injection of 0.1 cc of sterile saline over the same muscle on the same arm. The pertinent histories and reactions of the subjects are as follows:

Subject No. 1. E.B.M. always had been sensitive to the bite of *Aedes aegypti*. He participated in the experiments of 1929 and showed a strong reaction to the freshly prepared venom extract. Eight-year-old salivary gland extract produced an urticating wheal that persisted. It very closely paralleled the reaction described in 1929 for the same person.¹

Subject No. 2. Mr. P., who had worked during the previous summer on a mosquito survey project in the Tennessee Valley, supposedly had acquired some immunity. He showed a mild reaction to the test injection, which disappeared completely within 45 minutes.

Subject No. 3. F.C.B. frequently had allowed colonies of *Aedes aegypti* and very closely related species to feed upon his person. Most of this mosquito feeding took place during the years from 1933 to 1936. The feeding of *A. aegypti* upon his arm produced no reaction. The bleb caused by the injection of this 8-year-old venom extract disappeared just as rapidly as did that of the saline control. Although the subject was carefully observed for a possible delayed reaction, none was detected.

Therefore, it would seem that, after 8 years of storage, this salivary extract from *Aedes aegypti* still retained toxicity for those who react to the fresh toxic substance of the yellow fever mosquito.

¹ McKinley, E. B., PROC. SOC. EXP. BIOL. AND MED., 1929, **26**, 806.