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An Economical Method of Obtaining Blood from the Canary.

HARRY BECKMAN AND ROBERT K. OTA.

From the Department of Pharmacology, Marquette University School of Medicine.

In the ordinarily employed method of making smears of the peripheral blood of the canary in avian malaria studies experience has taught that bleeding from the punctured toe vein is controlled more effectively by releasing the bird at once after obtaining the required amount of blood than by the application of pressure or the use of styptic agents. But the blood loss nevertheless is quite considerable, and when daily smears are being made the anemia which is quickly induced very seriously complicates certain types of study. The object of the present note is to describe a bleeding method in which no more blood is lost than the very small amount actually required for the smear; we have been employing it routinely with entire satisfaction for the past year.

In Fig. 1 it will be seen that the bird is held in the palm of the left hand and that a claw is held in position against the first finger by the thumb of that hand and the tip of the third finger of the right hand while the lancet is poised to make a stab incision at right angles

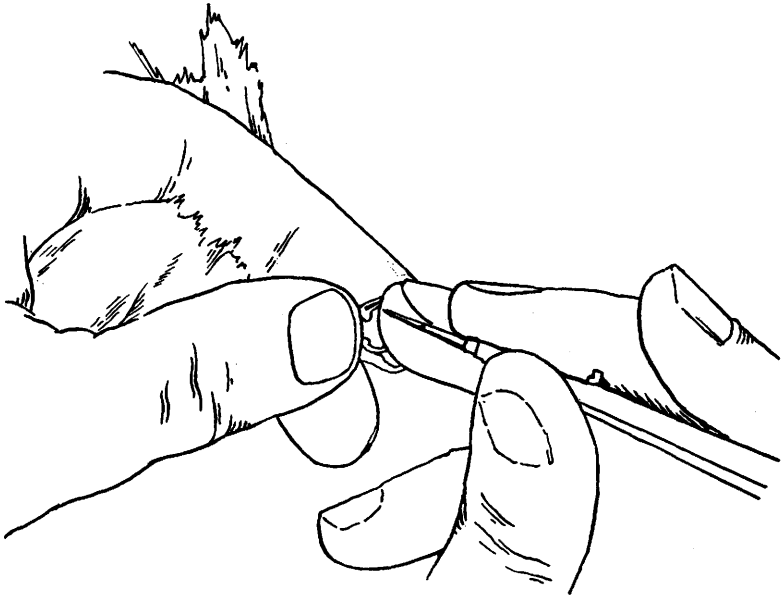

FIG. 1.

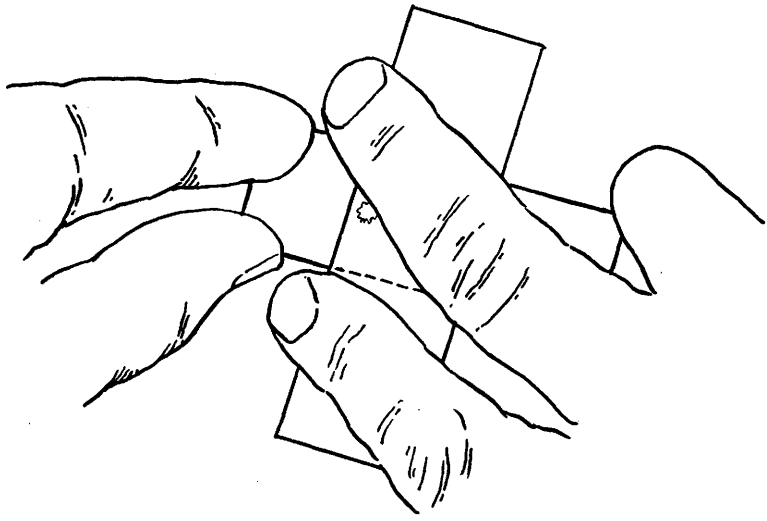

FIG. 2.

to the course of the vessel. Upon appearance of a drop of blood as large as an ordinary pinhead a slide is touched to it and the thumb is at once advanced to cover the wound and stop the bleeding by the momentary application of slight pressure. We have never seen one of these wounds continue bleeding after this manipulation nor have we seen one begin to bleed again when the bird resumes activity; on the other hand, it is often possible to obtain several smears on successive days by lightly applying the lancet to the same incision.

The making of a satisfactory smear from such a small quantity of blood we have found to be somewhat difficult when the classical method of shoving forward with the edge of a second slide held at 45 degrees is employed. But with the method illustrated in Fig. 2 we have excellent results. Just before the blood has ceased to spread between the 2 slides the fingers of the right hand make slight pressure upon the edge of the top slide and it is pulled across to the right with a rather sharp movement.