

## Records

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[Stansfeld JM, Francis AE, Stuart-Harris CH \(1944\)](#). Laboratory and clinical trials of Patulin. *Lancet* 2:370-372.

### Key passages

LABORATORY AND CLINICAL TRIALS  
OF PATULIN

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## Treatment of the Common Cold

### ORGANISATION OF CLINICAL TRIALS

During March, 1943, preliminary experiments were carried out at a primary training wing for infantry to ascertain whether patulin had any demonstrable effect on the severity or duration of the ordinary afebrile coryza or common cold. The investigator was supplied with two solutions, A and B, but he was not told which solution contained the active compound. Nearly 50 patients with coryza were treated with the solutions by nasal instillation of drops of the solutions, alternate cases being treated with the two solutions. It was found difficult to assess the effect of treatment, in view of the lack of real objective signs which could serve as a check to the patient's subjective feelings. Among both treated and controls some colds showed some improvement but this varied a good deal. Improvement coming on in 2 days and lasting for a week after the start of treatment might be classed as "cure." On this basis, "cures" were recorded among 5 of the 25 patients treated with patulin and in none of the 25 controls. Therefore although only one-fifth could be regarded as "cures" we felt that further trials were indicated.

The later trials were undertaken at a different primary training wing in August and September, 1943. The investigator was given solutions labelled C and D, F and G. One of each pair of solutions contained patulin. The procedure was that the technician allotted alternate patients for treatment with each solution and handed the appropriate solution to the clinician. Neither patient nor clinician knew at the time of treatment, or when the results were being recorded, whether patulin or control solution had been used. The technique of administration was changed to nasal spraying in order to conform to that used by Surgeon-Commander Hopkins. The solutions used were supplied from a military laboratory, and were prepared from a single sample of patulin, sent by Professor Raistrick, who had stated that the stability of the compound in solution was largely controlled by pH and that the substance should be dissolved in phosphate buffer at pH 6.0. He also stated that in his view the exact composition of the buffer was not of importance, and a mixed disodium phosphate and monosodium phosphate was therefore used throughout the work.

### ANALYSIS OF CASES AND RESULTS

During the trial the investigator did not gain any impression that one solution was better than the other; so personal bias in assessing results was eliminated as far as possible. All the data were obtained before an analysis of the results was begun.