

ing some of the places where the action of stimulating substances would be exercised, thus locking the transmission of nerve impulses.

Between the basic research phase and the time it was perfected, Blocadren was subjected to rigorous analyses in a number of countries. In Norway, 20 hospitals, serving one-third of that country's population, took part in a study that lasted 33 months and involved approximately 1,880 patients.

The authors of the study stated that Blocadren produced a substantial reduction in the number of mortalities and recurrences of infarctus among patients who survived the acute phase of myocardial infarction, when the treatment was started between the seventh and twenty-eighth day after the symptoms appeared and was continued for a fairly lengthy period of time, sometimes up to 33 months.

Blocadren reduced the over-all mortality rate by 39.4 per cent among victims of confirmed cases of myocardial infarction and by 49.6 per cent among the high risk group. The rate of sudden mortalities declined by 44.6 per cent in all risk groups and by 56 per cent in the high risk group.

The study also revealed that the results were beneficial regardless of age, sex, use of tobacco, high blood pressure, the seat of the disease or the seriousness of the first heart attack.

The unfavourable reactions are somewhat similar to those encountered with all "beta blockers", namely bradycardia (slow pulse), cold extremities, obstruction of the bronchia, and more frequent weakness or fatigue.

Merck Frosst

The Merck Frosst Laboratories in Kirkland are dedicated to basic research. The highly specialized centre combines the disciplines and equipment required in many specialized fields of pharmaceutical research: therapeutic chemistry, organic chemistry, biochemistry, immunology, physiology, pharmacology, pathology and pharmacy.

According to Hubert Martel, president of Merck, Sharp & Dohme Canada, Merck Frosst spent some \$5 million in 1980 on pharmaceutical research in Canada. In addition to developing products to make them pharmaceutically acceptable, Merck Frosst also conducts research in clinical pharmacology and carries out intermediate and advanced clinical studies.

Canada and Sweden sign nuclear agreement

Canada and Sweden have exchanged notes supplementing a 1977 nuclear agreement between the two countries.

Secretary of State for External Affairs Mark MacGuigan and Swedish Ambassador to Canada Kaj Björk signed the exchange of notes which will provide Canada with the non-proliferation assurances it requires for exporting nuclear material to

Sweden. Under the exchange of notes, Canada will assure Sweden of supplies of the nuclear material it needs for its nuclear energy program.

Canada and Sweden share similar views on non-proliferation and safeguards. The exchange of notes indicates the importance both countries attach to nuclear power and to continued co-operation.

External affairs minister visits Venezuela

Secretary of State for External Affairs Mark MacGuigan visited Venezuela, January 13-16, for talks with officials of that country.

During his visit to Caracas, Dr. MacGuigan met with President Luis Herrera Campins, Foreign Minister José Alberto Zambrano Velasco, Minister of the Interior Montez de Oca, Minister of Energy and Mines Calderon Berti and Vice-Minister of Agriculture Julio Cesar Beraza.

Their talks centred on multilateral issues such as the North-South conference, held last October in Cancun, Mexico, and events in Central America.

On bilateral issues, Dr. MacGuigan and the Venezuelan ministers spoke of negotiation of a framework agreement that would stimulate closer and more diversified relations. They also announced their intention to hold annual political consultations at the ministerial level.

The Canadian and Venezuelan sides discussed the reliability of Venezuela as a supplier of oil to Canada. While Canadian exports in general to Venezuela remained relatively stable at more than \$650 million in 1980, imports grew by 46 per cent to almost \$2.2 billion. This was due to increases in the price of oil, which comprises the largest part of Canadian imports.

Venezuelan Energy Minister Calderon Berti said that he welcomed the role played by Petro-Canada International in petroleum exploration activities in the region. Venezuela and Canada have been implementing, for several years, programs of technological co-operation and investment on heavy crudes.

Dr. MacGuigan and the Venezuelan ministers also discussed the prospect of increased agricultural imports and the possible sale to Venezuela of Canada's CL-215 aircraft.



Dr. Mark MacGuigan (centre) speaks with Mr. José Alberto Zambrano Velasco (right) and Canada's Ambassador to Venezuela Peter Johnston.