

This caused a black discoloration of the nails. The result of a winter's work was that the nails became so black as to be distinctly noticeable and to attract unpleasant attention. It was principally on this account that it was desired to eliminate the bichlorid solution. I was led to try formalin solution principally by the fact that it has entirely displaced bichlorid solution in the practice of Dr. Charles Jacobs, of Brussels, and that of Drs. G. E. and J. Lynn Crawford, of Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

"After having used formalin solution for about a month, a great inflammation appeared at the end of all my fingers, involving the nails. This inflammation was so violent that serum formed under the nails, separating them from the underlying tissue, and it seemed for a time as though all the nails would be exfoliated. Under the influence of rest and elevation of the parts, together with an ointment of ichthyol, prescribed by Dr. H. C. Stelwagon, the inflammation subsided without suppuration. As a consequence, however, the nails separated on an average for about one-third of their length from the distal extremity, but they are now gradually returning to the normal. It was an interesting question as to the cause of the inflammation. The simultaneous involvement of all the finger ends excluded with reasonable certainty ordinary infection as a cause. My previous condition of health, and also an investigation by Dr. Judson Daland, excluded gout or other systemic causes as a possible explanation of the condition. A local irritation was left as the only reasonable explanation. As the use of formalin was the only change which had been made in the method of hand disinfection which had been used for years, it was evident to me that this was the cause of trouble; and on reflection it was recalled that on the two days preceding the attack rubber gloves had been worn during four hours each day in the operating room, and also that on these two days the gloves had been put on filled with a solution of formalin 1 to 500. My usual practice in putting on gloves is to have them filled with salt solution, but on the two days in question the operating-room staff being unusually busy, the gloves were filled with formalin solution to avoid taking the nurse away from other duties. The factors concerned in the production of the inflammation were: First, the use of formalin solution, and second, its prolonged contact with the finger ends, there being enough of the solution left inside the gloves to keep the finger ends moistened in the solution while the gloves were worn. This experience is reported not to warn others against the use of formalin solution for hand disinfection, but to teach the importance of avoiding a prolonged contact with even a dilute solution of this agent."—*American Medicine*.