

SUMMARY OF VIEWS EXPRESSED AT THE DISCUSSION  
ON SERUM DIAGNOSIS AT THE MEETING OF THE  
AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION AT  
PHILADELPHIA.

The committee appointed by the Chairman of the Section on Practice of Medicine make the following report :

1. In selecting the material used in making the test the choice between : *a*, serum, *b*, dried blood, *c*, fluid blood, and *d*, blister fluid, will depend largely upon whether the object be scientific research, clinical diagnosis in hospital or private practice, or public laboratory diagnosis where the samples have to be sent some distance.

2. In spite of considerable variation in technique, there has been a remarkable uniformity in the results obtained by those taking part in the discussion, and their average of about 95 per cent, of successes agrees with the general average of the cases, nearly four thousand, thus far recorded in medical literature.

3. Each of several methods of technique advocated may thus give good results in the hands of those thoroughly familiar with the details found necessary in each case and the sources of error to be avoided, success depending rather on being perfectly familiar with one method than on the particular one selected.

4. For routine diagnostic work even the very simplest methods may give good practical results, but for recording scientific observations those methods which are accurately quantitative should be selected. This is especially necessary in reporting exceptional cases at variance with the general results recorded or where the observations are made the basis of generalizations.

5. A complete reaction should comprise both characteristic clumping and total arrest of motion occurring within a definite time limit. For practical diagnostic work a dilution of 1 to 10, with a fifteen minute time limit, is convenient. In any doubtful case the dilution should be carried as far as 1 to 50 or perhaps 1 to 60, and a reaction not obtainable at that point should not be regarded as perfectly conclusive. For these higher dilutions the time limit should be extended to two hours.

6. Intensity of reaction in a given serum should be estimated by determining the degree to which it may be diluted without losing its power of giving a decided reaction, both as to agglutination and loss of motion.

7. The intensity of reaction shown by the same serum is influenced by the age, condition and virulence of the test culture and by the