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OFFICIAL DOSAGE.*

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It is now more than two years since our late lamented colleague, Dr. Anstie, referred, in the pages of the *Practitioner*, to the very uncertain and misleading directions of our official dosage. The text on which his remarks were founded was a case which made a good deal of sensation at the time, and provoked much varied controversy as to the best mode of obviating the disasters which might at any time arise from a similar combination of circumstances.

A physician in Ramsgate, being in attendance on a severe attack of delirium tremens, prescribed half an ounce of tincture of digitalis to be repeated if necessary in four hours, but the chemist observing that the quantity was eight times larger than the maximum dose allowed by the British Pharmacopœia, refused to make up the medicine as ordered.

The patient died, and, in the inquiry which followed, the medical man expressed his belief that digitalis used according to his instructions might have arrested the disease and saved the sufferer's life. And although the chemist had so far a good line of defence by appealing to the standard book of official references in his particular department, he was severely censured by the coroner on the reasonable ground that it was his clear duty to have communicated with the prescriber and ascertained whether the apparently excessive dose was actually ordered with deliberate intent. Now, although public opinion at that time turned strongly against the man who, by his excess of caution, contributed to so unfortunate a

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